Painting As A Source of Rajasthan History

Dr RAM PANDE

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List of Participants

1. Shri R C Agarwal Director (Retd) Archaeology & Museums Govt of Rajasthan Jaipur
2. Km Veerbala Bhavsar Dept of Drawing & Paintings University of Rajasthan Jaipur
3. Dr V S Bhatnagar Reader in History Univ of Rajasthan
4. Shri P L Chakravarty Director Archaeology & Museums Rajasthan Jaipur
5. Shri Ashutosh Dadhich Univ Dept of History Jaipur
6. Dr Asok Kumar Das Director S M S II Museum Jaipur
7. Shri Heera Lal Deopura Revenue Minister Raj Jaipur
8. Shri B Hooja Uniara Gardens Jaipur
9. Dr Hot Chand Sr Chemist Archaeology & Museums Govt of Rajasthan Jaipur
10. Shri C S Mehta Head of Univ Dept of Drawing & Paintings Jaipur
11. Shri I S Mehta Uniara Gardens Jaipur
12. Smt Bimla Mishra Dept of Drawing & Paintings Univ of Raj Jaipur
13. Dr Jyotsna Pande B 424 Malviyanagar Jaipur
14. Dr Ram Pande 3/10 Gandhinagar Jaipur
15. Shri B M S Parmar Registering Officer Kota
16. Smt Rita Pratap E 268 Gretar Kailash Pt I New Delhi
17. Shri H S Ramani Secretary Culture Govt of Raj Jaipur
18. Dr Sadhna Rastogi Govt College Kotputli
19. Dr Jagat Narain Govt College Kota
20. *Shri Yaduendra Sahai* Keeper S M S *II Museum Jaipur*
21. Shri R D Sharma Punjab University Chandigarh
22. Honbale M L Shrimal Chief Justice Sikkim High Court Gangtok
23. Dr Sangram Singh Nawalgarh House Jaipur
24. Shri R V Somani Kalyanji Ka Rasta Jaipur
25. Shri Vijay Kumar Supdt Excavations *Directorate of Archaeology* & Museums Raj Jaipur
26. Shri Vijai Shankar Srivastava Deputy Director Archaeology & *Museums* Raj *Jaipur*
27. Dr R.K Vashishtha Univ Dept of Drawing & Paintings Jaipur

From the Pen of the Editor

Painting is supreme amongst all the arts and it reflects the best expression of the mood of man Rajasthan is surprisingly rich in the pictorial tradition beginning from prehistoric days It has practically a continuous story as revealed from painted potsherds unearthed from the womb of earth followed by prehistoric rock shelters with paintings illustrated manuscripts miniatures and the painted walls of temples *havelis* and cenotaphs of the late period Their discovery preservation and interpretation is the need of the day so that various facets of our cultural and aesthetic life can be unfolded They are untaped source material of our history which need investigation and analytic study The strokes of early man tell the story how he evolved a happy but a struggled life amidst the scenic natural surrounding The illustrated manuscripts have preserved vast material with literary and cultural data The aesthetic aspiration of the artist reached its zenith in Rajasthani paintings both in miniatures and murals The themes cover a vast canvas and assume wider dimensions The beauty of the female forms attracted the painter most Ladies in their various moods hunting sports past times of the royalty the glamour of *darbar mehfil* and *harem* pictorial delineation of the religious themes *Ragamala* and *Barahmasa* became the favourite subjects of the artists The mural tradition as preserved in Rajasthan belonging to 17 19 cent AD is rich repertaire of source material for the study of the contemporary religious social and economic life

Most of the ancient and medieaval trade routes lay through the lands of Rajasthan Generally point lost sight of continuous trade and cultural movement in the large segement of Asia and some parts of Europe between 12th to 17th centuries influenced the course of Rajasthani Painting and glimpsed like an inter national movement which demostrates the inter national brotherhood co operation and religious tolerance This aspect need to be studied afresh

The seminar organised last year by Shodhak probed seriously on these aspects and the papers presented indeed brought to light facts

hitherto unknown If the proceedings which is in your hands inspire the researchers art historians and connoisseurs for further investigations our labours will be rewarded We are grateful to the authorities of the ICHR New D lhi for some financial assistance made available to us for convening the seminar on such a lively topic Participants deserve all commendation for the active cooperation rendered by them We are also grateful for cooperation guidance and concrete suggestions to make these *proceedings* more valuable and educative to Sarvashri Dr A K Das (Director S M S II Museums Jaipur) Shri Vijay Shankar Srivastava (Deputy Director Archaeology and Museums Rajasthan Jaipur) And Shri P L Chakravarty (Director Archaeology & Museums Rajasthan Jaipur) deserves special thanks to spare the auditorium of his department to hold the seminer

—**Ram Pande**

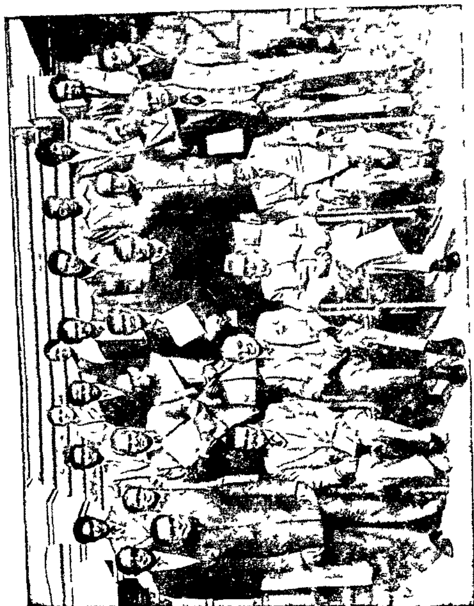
यथा सुमेरु प्रवरा नगाना
यथाण्ड जाना गरुड प्रधान
यथा जनाना प्रवर क्षितीश
स्तथा कलानामिह चित्रकल्प ॥

—विष्णुधर्मोत्तर, III खड, X/III/39

As Sumeru is the chief of the mountains
As Garuda is the chief of those bornout of eggs
As King is the chief of men
Even so in the world is the **practice of Painting**
The chief of all arts

केसव कहि न जाय क्या कहिए
देखत तव रचना विचित्र हरि समुझि मन हि मन रहिए
सुन भीति पर चित्र रग तन बिनु लिखा चितरे

—आचाय केशवदास



Paintings As A Source of Rajasthan History

Art in general and pictorial art in particular, constitutes an important source of Rajasthan s history The forms and styles of art h..d changed from age to age all of them exhibit a process of evolution in their successful stages and supply to a certain extent a solution to most of the cultural social and some times (also) political problems

As far as Rajasthan is concerned pictorial art material available in rock shelters from the Chambal and the Banas river beds most of them now falling within the present state of Madhya Pradesh but forming part of the undivided western India supply us interesting pictorial art material for knowing the life of the nomadic early man All the early murals in rockshelters present in them hunting scenes and mostly wild animals which were hunted by the early man The rural economy of those days forced the use of only ochre colour by the painters in painting on the walls of rockshelters These primitive drawing exhibit in them the artistic sense of the artist attempting these murals Days and years rolled by and male and female figures also began to be painted on walls and besides ochre colour other colours were also used in some rock shelters Most of these paintings in rock shelters belong to the proto historic period

The tradition of painting is of hoary antiquity in Rajasthan In a recent paper Girija Kumar has listed more than hundred painted rock shelters in east south and south east Rajasthan namely in the river valleys of Parvati Parwan Chambal Darrah and Alania Painted potsherds dating back to the age of Harappan culture have been discoverd in Kalibangan and Pilibangan in northwest Rajasthan Though it is neither possible nor probable to use these wealth of material for reconstruction the artistic and cultural history of Rajasthan they nevertheless throw valuable light on the early inhabitants of the State, the environment in which they lived and their cultural (as well as

commercial) contacts with the adjacent regions of central Asia and eastern Middle East

Art and archaeology go hand in hand in ancient times histoty, a study of rock-shelter murals at Bhimbethka Raisin Kharvari Satkunda Narwar Chikloo Jawara Malkhar Childant Mori Kedare shwar Hinglajgadha Sita Khardi Alania and Darrah etc shows that both green and ochre colours were used in paintings We learn from the subject portrayed in the murals that when the wild animals became strong the archer or the hunter also gained prominence and that is why different types of bows and arrows with their users got prominence in society This is born-out from the depictions in rockshelters of mesolithic age In this evolutionary age society produced dances and group dancing became popular Not only did community dancing become popular but social rejoicings also gained ground The growing trend of the society can be studied from the ornaments used by women of those days which are depicted in murals These ornaments consist of armlets anklets necklaces etc The face was also dyed and tattooed We get from Javara Malkhar a milkmaid with a milk pitcher on her head besides a bone figure of a mother goddess As a result of excava tions from some of the aforesaid sites we get alongwith stone imple ments stoners of green colour also which were probably powdered for being used in the execution of murals in rock shelters To the late mesolithic age belongs another goddess figure of bone which is very artistically executed We get from trench III E 2 at Bhim Bethka a fairly good idea of a bow carrier dance with a beautiful head dress the type which is not found any where else The dancer s head has a deer s face This figure is in the midst of wild animals like bull buffalo fish sambhar etc Probably the dancer depicted with them acted as their god

An artistic study of the rock shelter murals leads one to believe that in the society of these days artist had attained aesthetic sense in attempting murals Before 2500 B C the art of etching was in practice in this area In the mesolithic age the colours used were mostly white and red But in the late mesolithic age green and light green colours were profusely used The depictions of this age were not only good in composition but also had force in the movement of lines The ground was so well painted that the composition did not lose balance or proportion when the drawings were attempted on them in colour

The excavations at Ahar revealed unpainted black and red blotchy grey and the red slipped with variations like orange tan and chocolate painted black on red black and red the lustrous red and blotchy grey wares The decoration in the pottery at Ahar was painted, incised and applied The painter at work in pot decoration indulged in strokes lines line spirals wavy lines hatched diamonds and banners in *some and in the* black painting on red ware he used *only hands* wavy lines and loops The discovery of painted pottery from the pro historic and historical sites as a result of excavations reveal the use by people of the black and red ware the painted grey ware and the northern black polished ware

As these types of pottery could not be produced unless these were in demand by the then public and the artist working at such pots was keen to cater to the aesthetic sense of the people by providing them artistic things of daily use we would not have found from Noh Jodhpura etc such coloured pot sherds in a fairly large quantity These pot sherds when studied in the context of the social and economic conditions of the *people* of times lead us to think Rajasthan s common man was progressing towards an enlightened society and the economic condition of Rajasthan of those days was *improving* day by day

From Nallasar Sambhar where excavations were conducted by D R Sahni we get such pottery pieces are having on them floral patterns in relief having glazed paint of various colours on them These pot sherds studied in the context of associated objects belong to the Gupta period of Indian History Thus through the medium of coloured pottery of daily use the artist of Rajasthan served the society and moved with the growing artisic trends *All these presupposes the econo mic prospertiy* of the people of Rajasthan during the Gupta period which has been called the Golden Age of Northern India The existence of quite a *good number of* illustrated palm leaf and paper manuscripts in the manuscript libraries of Rajasthan ranging from the 11th century is a proof of the fact that artistic activity in Rajasthan existed even when different Rajput principalities had *their roots* in Rajasthan The social and economic life of the people in the early medieval medieval and post medieval Rajasthan can be deduced from study of illustrated manuscripts and the illustrated book covers in a fairly intelligble manner when we find that the manuscripts which have Jaina themes in them were not attempted under royal patronage but in Jaina temples

and upasaras which were maintained with the funds of the Jainas who were the commercial magnates of Rajasthan The social and economic life of the people in those days can be studied on the basis of the flora and fauna depicted in the background of the illustrations and book covers preserved in the grantha bhandaras

Actual examples of paintings earlier to the eleventh century have not been found though the tradition of painting was very much in vogue in Rajasthan Several manuscripts from the eleventh century and onward contained descriptions of painting and notes on their technique and materials The earliest materials in this regard are found in two palm leaf manuscripts **Ogha Niryukti and Dasa Vaikalika Sutra Churni** in the Jaisalmer Jaina Bhandar both dated 1117 V S(1080A D) Similar painted wooden book covers containing figures of divinities, floral and bird animal motifs and portraits of celebrated Jaina teachers have been found in different manuscript depositories (jnana bhandaras) belonging to the 12th century Several of these were painted at Ajmer Pali and Abu Contemporary literary works are elequent about the existence of painting on the walls of palaces of Prithviraja Chauhan of Ajmer who died in 1192 A D In the following century Abu and Ahar became important centres of paintings and the Ms of **Savaka padik kaman sutta churni** of 1317 VS (1260 AD) is regarded as one of the earliest examples of the flourishing school of Mewar

We find also unity in diversity in the field of culture when we compare the illustrations in the earliest Jain manuscript **Oghaneryukta Vritti** of the Jain Grantha Bhandara of Jaisalmer with the illustrations in the Pali and Nepalese manuscripts dealing with Buddhist themes, where in the human figures the flate face and the elongated eyes do not find a place in them The **Bhagwati Sutra** of the same library **Savaga Padamakramana Sutta Churni** (now in the Boston Museum) **Supasnaha Chariyam** and others also give us a clear picture of the medieval society of Rajasthan by depicting human faces with the costumes *representa* tive of the same age The use of dark red yellow gold silver bule etc by the artists (after having prepared them with earth colour materi als of Rajasthan) in all the illustrated manuscripts is indicative of the economic wealth of Rajasthan and its easy availablity to the artist for being used in illustrating the manuscripts the paper of which was also hand made and was manufactured in Rajasthan itself

Basil Gray writing introduction for Rajput Paintings of the Faber Gallery of Oriental Art mentions Dr A K Coomaraswamy s book on Rajput paintings the later defined his subject as the Hindu painting of Rajputana and the Panjab Himalays —adding' Rajput painting in the counterpart of the vernacular literature of Hindustan — Basil Gray s introduction is very important from our point of view to be quoted

Rajputana is the name of different princely units marked in Atlases and maps Rajput painting has a wider extension not only as Dr Coomaraswamy indicated to the north but also into Bundelkhand to the east and in some degree to Gujarat in the south west It is characteristic of the areas under the rule of Rajputs the fighting and chivalric class who kept Hindu civilization alive in northern India during the centuries of Muhammadan dominion which started with the invasion of Mohammed Bin Qasim and his rule in Sindh (7th century) The decay of the large Hindu Kingdoms of the Chalukyas in western India following the death of Vishandevi in 1261 and of Kashmir in the north in the twelfth century, led to the independence of a number of small Rajput states The Hill states of the western Himalayas were also ruled by Rajputs who originally came from the plains and acquired these lands by conquest Political independence threw a greater cultural responsibility on all the Rajput rulers Their rule was patriarchal, based on the ownership of land and as in other feudal societies bards often succeeding father to son in regular heredity were maintained in the households and, in the same way we may suppose from the practice of later days painters

Then in the fifteenth century two things revolutionized the practice of painting in northern India, these were the rise of varnacular literature and the frequent use of paper This literature came into existence because as according to George Grierson the Sanskrit tradition had been broken with the destruction of the medieval Hindu kingdoms and the people were seeking their own religion and means of expression They found a teacher in Ramananda who early in the fifteenth century left his monastery to preach a new simple religion which could be understood by the common man His followers were known as the Liberated because they had thrown off the rigid doctrines of the orthodox Pandits Their influence spread all over northern India carried by itinerant poets who recited to the people in their own vernacular, stories from the legends of the Hindu maythology (Puranic) By

the sixteenth century the leaders of the movement were poets rather than reformers But the root of their influence lay in the appeal of the personal deity whom they celebrated whether it was Rama as in the new version by Tulsi Das (the Ramayana begun in 1574) or of Krishna as in the songs of Chaitanya (d c 1527) or of the Rajput princess Mira Bai

The story of Rama and Sita had centuries before been carried to every corner of the world to which Indian influence reached and had been everywhere pictured in stone and lines but its true popularity only came to it in the vernacular Tulsi Das was looked up to by the greatest men of the itmes even at the court of the Mughal emperors and his Ramayana was known to everyone Many large series of paintings were made to illustrate it

Beside the epic cycle of the heroism of Rama and the purity of Sita where developed at the same time the symbolic love story of Krishna and Radha as representing God and the soul or the active and passive elements The many songs on this theme were on everyone s lips until their persons were accepted as the patterns of the ideal hero and heroine Consequently in northern India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it is not generally the stories of Krishan s pranks as a child (afterwards so favourite a theme with the Pahari artists) as much as his love for Radha anatomized in a medieval way which found expression in so many pictures and poems For that the verse describes the picture both express the sentiment (rase) of the moment chosen Such subjects were systematized especially by the poet Kesava Das of Orchha in Bundelkhand in his Rasikapriya (finished in 1591) A nearly contemporary manuscript with illustrations has survived till today The author s patron was Raja Indarjit Singh Bundela ruler of Orchha and it has been suggested that the manuscript was copied in Bundelkhand but of this there is no evidence for Kesava Das had a high reputation all over northern India

The miniatures in this manuscript forty four of which are known mostly now preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, have the cool colouring and preference for full profile which are typical of the Mughal school at the beginning of Jahangir s reign (1605 27) but retain the simple compositions on a single plane which are charac-

teristic of the western Indian medieval school principally known to us through the considerable body of Jain manuscript illustrations from Gujarat Several scholars in India and in the West have made considerable study of this Gujarati school and have published enough examples to give a good idea of its character range and development from the early palm leaves of the first half of the twelfth century to its extinction in the Mughal period

This school was at its height about the middle of the fifteenth century but it survived so strongly into the Mughal period that Akbar found the best of the artists recruited to his library to be Gujaratis Special economic conditions rather than any religious movement account for the relatively large number of late medieval illuminated manuscrip s from Gujarat namely the existence of a wealthy middle class as patrons and the constant intercourse by trade with Persia through the port of Broach supplying examples of Persian manuscripts

Very little Rajput paintings now known to survive can even tentatively be put earlier than 1600 A D There is in fact on dated document but it is permi sible to accept a late sixteenth century date for a small group of paintings which exhibit stylistic similarities with a series of illustrations to a Gujarati manuscript dated 1591 A D The most important from this point of view are some pictures illustrating the Gita Govinda (in the N C Mehta collection and desribed and illustrated by him in J I S O A XIII) In brilliance of colouring and decisive draughtsmanship nearer to the older Gujarati school of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century are some illustrations to the love story Chaura panchasika of the poet Bilhana These show a more skilful hand a greater range both of colour and of composition They have to the full of *the old western Indian liking for textile designs and pleasure in transpa* rent drapery But they have a dance rhythm unknown in Gujarat Connected with these are two series each of twelve pictures apparently treating themes connected with the twelve months now in the Lahore Museum Such subjects known as Baramasa were a favourite theme for poets especially in western India and the pictures seem to illustrate some romantic poem rather than a seasonal sequence They are not so accomplished in drawing as the Chaura panchasika series but the compositions are more elaborate and the colouring less voilent The tension is relaxed and they correspond to a decorated prose style as against a strict verse form Probably rather later but still connected with this group are two lyrical pictures illustrating

Krishna Lila themes in the Boston Museum Collection Their affinities with the well documented manuscripts of Gujarat are not so close as the Uttaradhyana Sutra of 1591 A D but are sufficient to justify a general attribution to a western rather than a northern Rajput school

Sixteenth century Rajput painters contributed an important element in the formation of the Mughal style little attempt has been made to trace in their work the style which they themselves had practised before entering the Mughal court library Unnoticed scenes as that here reproduced (Fig 2) afford some evidence for the style of Rajput



Fig 2
A village scene of Late 16th Century

painting in the third quarter of the sixteenth century from Hamza-Nama an Islamic heroic story This is a village scene two girls drawing water from the well are wholly Rajput in costume hair dressing and in

style Painted on cotton about 1570 A D and a source for agrarian conditions of late 16th century

Rajput painters who had worked for a time at the Mughal court and learnt some of the science of miniature painting developed in Persia must have returned to their homes and there produced such work as the illustrations to Rasikapriya mentioned above More significant for the future are the first Rajput Ragmala paintings which also dated about this period for these themes were to be the main works of the school during the whole of the seventeenth century Music and song and dance were intimately connected with the religious revival in which Chaitanya was a powerful influence in the early sixteenth century

Rajput painting in the seventeenth century has formed as definite as those of the sonnet or the novel it portrays the states of love or the type of hero and heroine generally in illustration of theoretical or systematic poems treating of these themes but sometimes of lyrical poems like the Gita Govinda or the various seasonal love poems known as Baramsa Their most striking characteristics are symbolism and rhythm As in most Oriental paintings gestures are the means of expression and colour combinations form the elements of composition

Of the school of painting which flourished in the remote valleys of the western Himalayas we know little before the eighteenth century The only dated manuscript which is assigned to this area by documentary evidence is a Chittarasmanjari with colophon recording that it was written for Raja Krapala of Basohli in v s 1752 (A D 1694) Basohli is a small but ancient state whose history under its earlier name of Vellapur (also Vallabhpur) reaches back to the eleventh century With most of the other hill states it submitted to Akbar in 1590 during Zain Khan Koka s campaign The next ruler Krishan Pal who founded the old capital of Basohli in 1630 was imprisoned by Jahangir from 1614 27 During the height of the Mughal painting school all the Hill Rajas were in frequent touch with the Imperial court as a result of Akbar s policy of hostages and service in the Imperial army and administration In this way their court painters were as likely to see examples of Mughal painting as were those working at the more important courts in the plain It is therefore at present not possible to say where were produced the few half Mughal series of miniatures of the earlier seventeenth century which are at present known

Two conclusions may be suggested about the early history of

Rajput painting first that in the seventeenth century the style of the Hills represented by the Basohli school and that of the Plains were not very far apart Some undated Basohli miniatures in the William Rothen stein Collection in Lahore Museum the Tagore Collection elsewhere (Fig 3) are in a strongly individual style, rich and pompous



Fig 3—A Situation

in spite of the monotony of composition and lack of suppleness These too are comparable in their simple colour scheme their delightful use of transparent textiles and above all in their dramatic quality to the Ragmala paintings of the Plain

Without going as far as N C Mehta who suggested that the Gujarati school had a wider geographical extension to include much of Rajputana, it can be admitted that he is surely right in saying that the evolution of Rajput painting is vitally connected with the older tradition of Gujarati paintings

The course we have followed would suggest that the Gujarati school was in fact, only the most flourishing branch of the northern

India paintings in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century and secondly, that it served as a bridge for the introduction to Rajputana to certain Persian elements In all the work considered so far the influence of Mughal painting is superficial and subordinated to the native tradition

The bards of Rajputana had long celebrated the deeds of the reigning families of the several states before the practice of portraiture was learnt from the Mughal court (Fig 4 and 5) One of the painting (Fig 4) is about State Procession of a Rajput Raja of Rajasthani School



Fig 4—Royal Procession

of about 1760 This painting was formerly in the collection of the well known Indian civil servant and historian H T Prinsep (1792 1878) and the identification of the subject as Bhim Singh of Jodhpur (1793 1803) attached to it when acquired by the Museum is presumably due to him Nevertheless it is unacceptable because the Raja s features bear no resemblance to inscribed portraits of Bhim Singh and the turban which he used is not of the characteristic Jodhpuri shape It seems rather to belong to Bikaner but at present it is impossible to go further

This is typical of the kind of state portrait in vogue at all the Rajput courts during the eighteenth century The pomp and the choice of equestrian representation are copied directly from later Mughal imperial portraiture The artist changed the feeling of the scence by eliminating the extensive landscape and arranging the figures more hierarchically

The another painting (Fig 5) is about a Raja carried in a state Palki painted in 1780 on paper Compared to the last subject this portrait shows much less Mughal influence it is typical of the more



Fig 5—Raja in Palki

remote states such as Jaisalmer surrounded by the desert The paint ing is inscribed on the back with the name Son Singh but no Raja of this name is recorded His features resemble a portrait of Amar Singh of Jaisalmer and Son Singh might be the Painter

The painting shows the mixture of familiarity and reverence so characteristic of Rajput sentiment Because it express this ancient sentiment it is more living and vigorous than those dominated by Mughal example But it is not apparently until the eighteenth century that court scenes became one of the main themes of Rajput painting Dr H Goetz who has had opportunities of studying the collections preserved in several of the State Treasuries of Rajputana has stated that nowhere do these collections go back before 1700 and that in the first half of the eighteenth century the influence of the Mughal style is overwhelmingly strong both at Jaipur and Jodhpur There is also a general Mughalization of Ragmala paintings after 1725 superseding the older Rajput style and it can be concluded from them as from the portraits in the early years of the eighteenth century that Mughal example was everywhere in the Plains the model which all followed just as it was in architecture It has been suggested that this was due to the bigotry of Aurangzeb driving many of the best Mughal artists from the Imperial court to take service in the provincial courts

But there is little evidence from the paintings themselves to support this view The change in style is never so complete nor the finished so competent as to suggest that they were actually the work of Mughal artists

The recent discovery of **Rasikashtaka** by some scholars in the collection of Agarchand Nahta which is an illustrated manuscript attempted in Mewar on a non Jaina subject is indicative of the fact that the society of the 15th century patronised such secular subjects for being illustrated in manuscripts This was the result of the royal patronage afforded by Maharana Kumbha to the artists of Mewar To the 16th century may be ascribed several murals in Mewar Dhundhar etc , which on the basis of their depictions give us a vivid picture of social and economic life of Rajasthan

Scores of murals at Bikaner, Kota Bundi Jodhpur Jaipur etc and also in Shekhawati area portrayed in them social life scenes from Rajasthan The techniques of execution of these paintings, being both fresco buono and fresco socco are indicative of the progressive social and economic life prevailing in the various parts of Rajasthan The existence of thousands of miniature paintings in the museums of India and abroad and also with private art collectors is indicative of the fact that the royal patronage afforded to the artists in Rajasthan was adequate and it indirectly speaks well of the social and economic life of the people of those days

Rajput power was considerably eclipsed by the devastating effect of sultan Alauddin Khilji s inroads in Rajasthan when Abu Jaisalmer Jalore Chittor and Ranthambhor were ransacked and a wide void was created in the artistic and cultural situation It took many decades of efforts to restore the earlier glory By the first quarter of the fifteenth century many manuscripts with profuse illustrations were prepared by the Rajasthani artists including a **Supasanachariyam** MS and a **Gyanarnava** MS both painted at Delwara (Mewar) in 1485 VS (1428 AD) and a **Rasikastaka** MS illustrated in Mewar by the orders of Maharana Kumbha in 1492 VS (1432 A D) Several other MSS of the 15th and 16th centuries from the Mewar and adjacent regions have come to light including two Gita Govinda MSS our organisation Shodhak has listed all the known manuscripts and literary references pertaining to artistic contact of Mewar with Gujarat, Mandhu Jaunpur and Daulatabad

With the meteoric rise of the Mughals in northern India the culture fabric of Rajas han underwent drastic change as the Rajput royalty and nobility came into close relationship with the Mughals and got first hand knowledge and experience of their traditional achievements in every branch of art and culture Thriving schools of art flourished in all the capitals of majore and minor Rajput states like Mewar Jodhpur Bikaner, Bundi Kota Amber Jaipur, Kishangarh, Alwar Jaisalmer etc Painting was regarded as an important and intimate part of Rajasthani culture Painters were kept readily at hand to illustrate religious manuscripts for the King s private library, to portray the King his favouritis his daily life, his pastimes and to depict romantic love as described in literature musical melodies and folk tales A large corpus of paintings in the forms of albums and illustrated manuscripts was carefully preserved in their libraries.



Fig 6

In addition to these there were murals on the walls of palaces temples and havelis all over Rajasthan Painting was practised at village level in Rajasthan from the dawn of civilisation but the murals in palaces and shrines depict the classical tradition of painting as innovated and perfected in the local courts of Rajasthan with their respective individuality and variety Fig 6 is a portrait from the wall of Kishan Chand s Chatri at Jaipur constructed in 18th century Fig 7 is also wall Painting from the temple of Gopal Ganesh at Galtaji Jaipur Both the Portraits are exhibit of social and cultural life of 18th century Rajasthan

In the absence of securely dated and authenticated materials history writing becomes as difficult as sailing in unchartered ocean In the context of Rajasthan history is an admixture of folk tales myths bardic half truths and stories interspersed with solidly reliable m terials like epigraphs coins literary compositions archaeological remains archival records and contemporary accounts. In such circumstances paintings fill up some vacum as they form secured visual records prepared by trained artists for appreciative and enlight ened patrons

We had no idea or information regarding the cultural or artistic contribu tion of Mewar during the difficult years when the vali ant Rana Pratap and his son Amar Singh were defending their independence from repeated waves of Mughal attack The discovery of Dhola—Maru manuscript painted at Ahar near Udai pur in 1952 and a Ragamala set painted at Chawand in 1605 followed by other dated Ragamala and other sets from adjacent centres provided strong and irrefutable evidence to the existence of a thriving art as well as mural and literary tradition in Mewar Similarly, the wall paintings in the central baradari in the Mughal garden at Bairath and in the so called Bharmali Ki Chhatri and Man Singh Palace at Amber provide authentic



Fig 7

evidence to the existence of a growing art tradition intimately linked with Mughal painting in this region Recent discovery of a dated Ragmala series in formative Bundi style but painted at a place far away from its homeland has opened up a new vista in this regard The discovery of a **Rasamanjari** Ms of 1650 painted for a Rajput patron at Aurangabad or the recent finding of a **Devimahatmya** Ms painted at a place called Jaisinghpura in the pre Mughal style or three separate **Bhagavata Purana** sets (two of these are tentatively called the Isarda and the Palam Bhagavata Purana) in well marked early Rajasthani style, point out the importance of paintings in reconstructing the history of Rajasthan Such examples can be multiplied as many dated materials with Rajasthani provenances have come to light in recent years Ragmala sets from Pali Sirohi Malpura Bhagavata Purana sets from Bundi, Kota and Jaipur etc have put these places in the artistic horizon of Rajasthan

Apart from general indications regarding religious movements, economic prosperity and socio cultural development paintings provide us with a lot of information on people and places Rajasthani rulers were fond of pomp and pagentry Some of them commissioned paintings often elaborate and complicated compositions showing them as holding colourful court celebrating festivals leading army or engaged in sports and hunting or falconing Very often these paintings contain elaborate inscriptions identifying the officials and princes and recording the dates as noticed in a group of highly interesting paintings of Mewar Similar compositions with Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh of Jaipur painted by Lal have also been found

In Bikaner and Jaipur the painter very often recorded the name of the sitter as well as his own name The well known Jaipuri masters Sahibram and Ramjidas and a hord of famous ustads of Bikaner have carefully preserved for the *posterity studies of high dignitaries as well* as bumble folks like tailor trader carpenter dancer singer, instrument player holy men as well as themselves about whom we know too little or nothing from other sources

Ramjidas s drawings and painted sketches alongwith numerous other examples by his fellow painters like Hira Govinda Sahibram etc act as a variable portrait gallery of courtiers princes and other

visitors to the Jaipur Court We would not have known many of them but for their portraits, The portraits of musicians dancers and instru mentalists give a visual record of the celebrated Gunijankhana (depart ment of dance and music) of Jaipur

From the illustrated manuscripts of Gita Govinda Bhagavata Purana Ramayana Devi Mahamaya Ragmala and other works prepared by the staff artists of Sawai Pratap Singh of Jaipur or the extraordinary sets of Ragmala Gita Govinda Ramayana etc prepared for Maharana Jagat Singh of Mewar or similar profusion of illustrated MSS done during the reigns of appreciative patrons in Bundi Kota Kishangarh and Bikaner a whole range of socio cultural and religious details may be obtained Kishangarh is a tiny state with no spectacular historical achievement but with its extraordinary painting style created by an unusually gifted painter and his circle its name is familiar to the students of Rajasthan History Similarly the thikanas of Devgarh Rajgarh Jhilai Ghanerao of Pali would have remained unknown to the people outside their periphery but distinct schools of paintings blossoming in these places make them conspicuous amongs numerous other thikanas spread all over Rajasthan

The Rajasthani miniatures reflect in them details of Rajasthan s physical features, social customs dress and ornaments representing different strata of society (Fig 8 and 9) So far as the background of Rajasthani miniatures is con cerned the depiction of rivers tanks pools hills hilltops rocky land flora and fauna of the region in the form of flowers and leaves of various kinds trees creepers and grass of diverse forms fish peacocks cuckoos pige ons elephants camels etc make one feel that Rajasthan is not a desert land altogether but also a gay land of nature The scenes depicted in the back ground of paintings contain in them banana lotus mango peepul banyan,



Fig 8 Two Royal Young ladies Jodhpur

kadamba trees besides cloudy sky sky with lightening streaks rain drops water falls even land rows of swans lovely boughs of creepers deer skin etc There are palacial buildings with elaborate entrances arches etc and ordinary dwellings and huts made of clay and tiles In the buildings of rich people ornamental doors and windows with articles of luxury used by the occupants have been depicted So far the males and the females of then society go these paintings present in them a very graphic description to enable a student of culture to know the aesthetic taste of the society and also to asses on its basis, the economic standard of the people during different periods of Rajasthan s history Among the male costumes the dress depicted chiefly of a long tunic (angarakhi), shoes (pagarakhi) turban (pagari) waist band (kamarband) Shawl (dupatta) jacket (sadari) long shirt (kurta) along a piece of cloth around the waist and used also to cover the lower portion of the body (Dhus) and trousers (paijama) The decorative aids of males include pigments and dyes which consist of the tailak spot pastes between the brow chhap or sectarian marks The finger and toe nails also are depicted to have been dyed with henna on festivals



Fig 9

The male jewellery as known from the paintings consisted of Sarpench and mala (which adorned the turbans) ear rings of gold (bala dur and bir bali) earrings (murki), armlet (bhujaband) bracelet (bara), waist band (Kanagti) tora finger ring (mundari or anguthi), turban pires (Kalangi or turra) The costumes of the ladies, colourful as these were without any exception represented in paintings are of variegated colours Such different types of art techniques of dyeing and printing of cloth as are the envy and despair of the workers even to-day On the basis of different types of dyeing and printing depicted in the

dresses of the paintings we can have an idea of the various types of designs like pomcha dabka ko pilo dhanak chandon ka pila Lahariya dhani bhugara Samandar lahar etc Not only skirts (ghagharas) of various types were used by ladies but their blouses and bodices were also of different patterns All this is indicative of the changing fashion trends in social life and also of the economic prosperity confronting the periods to which the paintings of various sub schools belong

The ladies jewellery as deduced from the paintings is rich both qualitatively and quantitatively Their profuse use by ladies during the period to which the painting belongs speaks the peaceful atmosphere of the prevailing society of the time and also of Rajasthan s economic prosperity which was responsible for the production of pure gold jewellery of various types in a fairely large quantity Of the typical jewellery pieces of Rajasthan a reference may be made of bidla bata birbali, peepul patta panchamaniyan gokhru hathphool etc

The use of cosmetics by females is also evident from the miniatures Vermillion mark on the parting of the hair used only subsequent to marriage and discarded on becoming a widow mahavara on feet soles and toes collyum for eyes heena on fingers etc give us a fairly good idea of the social life of women in the postmedieval period in Rajasthan The paintings depicting Raga raginis barah masa and literary themes based on nayikabheda etc (Fig 7) give us an insight into the social and economic life of Rajasthan Through the miniatures dealing with twelve calendar months the artist, by opting a theme in which a warrior with his horse saddled before leaving for the battle-field goes to his beloved to bid good bye is kept waiting for her consent the beauty and charm of every month of the year is depicted by the artist through his brush and colour in the background Though it is impossible to presume that a Rajput warrior ignored the call of duty in the face of the call of love and passion the artist very beautifully has depicted not only the religious and other festivals of Rajasthan falling in various months but has also given an elaborate account of the customs and manners of Rajasthan Even in that set of baramasa where Krishna s arrival is awaited by the gopis the artist has described Rajasthan s social customs and manners with the help of his forceful brush and colours In the Raga ragini miniatures through some of the tunes of Indian music like the Todi ragini Hindol raga Bhairva raga, Asavari raga etc the painter depicted Rajasthan s flora fauna society

etc on the basis of the typically dressed males and females in the background of traditional Rajasthan architecture the literary texts like the Gita Govinda, Panchatantra Bihari s Satsai Rasika Priya of Keshava dasa etc forming part of depictions in Rajasthani paintings in some of its sub schools find themselves illustrated in typical Rajesthani style of paintings and present an interesting study in them of Rajasthan s social and economic life

Portraiture attempted by the artists of Rajasthan in the various sub schools the court scenes the hunting scenes etc in Rajasthani paintings when studies in the contexe of Rajasthan s society during the later medieval period supply in them a fairly good source meterial for the study of social and economic life of the aesthetic trends of Rajasthan s society but also the economic achievements of people through the ages.

Such examples can be multiplied For the future historians it is essential however to study these important materials purely as tools of history that would shed considerable light on the religious political, cultural, literary, artistic and social history of Rajasthan

Notes

1 Girraj Kumar Painted Rock Shelters from Rajasthan Cultural Contours of India (ed) V S Srivastava Delhi 1981 277 285

3 B B Lal Kalibangan and Indian Civilisation', Essays in Indian Proto history (ed) D P Agrawala and Dilip Chakraborty, Delhi 65 97 Y D Sharma 'From Kalibangan to Ropar Cultural Contours of India 17 24

3 Ramvallabh Somani 'Early Evidence of Paintings from Rajasthan ', Cultural Contours of India 286 ?91

4 Moti Chandra Jain Miniature Paintings from Western India Ahmedabad 1949 Muni Punyavijai Catalogue of Sanskrit and Prakrit MSS Jaisalmer Collection Ahmedabad 1972

5 Shridhar Andhare The Dhola Maru MS of the National Museum A consideration in style and date, Chhavi 2 Banaras 1981 298 300

6 Gopi Krishna Kanoria An Early Dated Rajasthani Ragamala JISOA XIX, 1952 311 5

7 For a recent survey see Andrew Topsfield 'Sahibdin s Gita Govinda illustration Chhavi 2 231 8

8 Karl Khandalavala Wall paintings from Amber Delhi 1979

9 *S C Welch and Milo C Beach Gods Thrones and Peacocks* New York 1965 58 fig 5 R Skelton Shakhy Phul and the origins of Bundi Painting Chhavi-2 123 124

10 Saryu Doshi "An illustrated manuscript from Aurangabad dated 1650 AD , Lalit Kala No 15, 19 28

11 M C Beach Imperial Image Washington 1981 55

12 Karl Khandalavala and Jagdish Mittal The Bhagavata MSS from Palam and Isarda A consideration of style Lalit Kala No 16 28 32

13 Karl Khandalavala and Moti Chandra New Documents of Indian Painting A re appraisal Bombay 1969

14 Andrew Topsfield Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria Victoria 1980 92ff

15 Asok K Das Miniatures Marg, Homage to Jaipur XXX 4 Y Sahai Sports and Pastime during the time of Sawai Ishwari Singh Cultural Heritage of Jaipur (ed) J N Aspa, Jaipur 1979 82 82

16 Asok K Das Ramjidas Chatera An eighteenth century portrait painter from Jaipur Cultural Contours of India, 317 323

17 Karl Khandalavala Moti Cehandra and Pramod Chandra minia ture Paintings from the Sri Moti Chand Khajanchi collection Delhi 1960 53 55 fig 81 94 H Goetz Arand Architecture of Bikaner State Oxford 1950

18 A K Coomaraswami Catalogue of the Indian Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Part V Rajput Painting Boston 1926

19 Twelve Mughal Paintings of the School of Humayun 1921

20 Basil Gray on Origins of the Rajput Paintings Burlington Maga zine February 1948

21 A K Das Paintings As a Source of Cultural History of Rajasthan Shodhak Vol 12 Part A 1983

Early Paintings of Rajasthan As Revealed by Archaeological Sources

—P L Chakravarty* & Vijai Kumar**

Early paintings of Rajasthan symbolise man s first artistic talent Outstanding pre historic paintings covering various stages of stone age and ranging between 30 000 B C to 3 000 B C have been discovered in different parts of Rajasthan particularly in Kota Jhalawar, Bhilwara Chittorgarh Mount Abu Ajmer Sawai Madhopur and Bharatpur regions These paintings are definitely an important land mark in the cultural history of Rajasthan

The paintings of deer buffaloes bears tigers fish geometrical designs and human figures have been executed with consummate skill The outline in many of the paintings had been done with red ochre and the inner part filled with white pigment In portraying buffaloes and other animals only red ochre was used The front of the buffaloes are shown completely filled red pigment and the rear part of the body with strokes It is an attempt to portray the animal in a realistic manner Some paintings depicting deer are of very high quality and the artist seems to have been master of lines and expression One of the paintings preserved shows a deer standing in front of the fire and something possibly a long spear of shield placed in front of it Another important feature of these paintings is that inner parts of various animals are shown with geometrical designs resembling the famous Bhimbetka pain tings of Madhya Pradesh This is also noteworthy that in some cases clear traces of the over painting noticed show the early man had been frequenting in these rock shelters either as a part of ritual or magic even he had changed his habitation from rock shelters.

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*Director & **Superintendent (Excavation) Deptt of Archaeology & Museums Rajasthan Jaipur

Now it is well known that a new and brilliant horizon has been presented to the history of paintings in Rajasthan by the epoch making discovery of the records of various protohistoric cultures at Ganeshwar (Sikar) Kalibangan (Ganga Nagar) Ahar and Gilund (Udaipur) Jodhpura (Jaipur) and Noh (Bharatpur)

The excavation at Ganeshwar datable to 3000 B C 2500 B C and comparable in importance to Harappan sites is the most promising settlement of the copper age yielding the rich gamut of painted pottery Ganeshwar pottery has considerably increased our knowledge about the technique and variety of painted motifs during the period under review These appear to have been executed with a bold hand The chief chara cteristic of the painting is the emphasis on the rim neck and shoulder as an the area for decoration in a few cases the painting extends below carination also A large number of them were painted in black with dots dashes and curves executed in white to highlight the black painted designs executed earlier The designs listed so far show a preponderance of geometric motifs mostly consisting of volutes wavy lines obliques balls triangles and crosses as well as broad lands Mention may also be made of a row of designs like ribbon knots and floral motifs

Although from Jodhpura (Jaipur) a wide range of copper age pottery have been discovered but the number of painted sherds is very limited here However the paintings discovered are quite akin to the Ganeshwar tradition An in depth study of these paintings communi cate that Ganeshwar Jodhpura culture is an important contribution of Rajasthan to the world archaeology

At Kalibangan (Ganga Nagar) enormous quantity of painted pottery datable between 2500 B C 1700 B C provides astonishing data and materials for the study of pictorial art which reveal a developed phase of the art of high aesthetic merit distinguished by highly imagi native and naturalistic quality and marvellous power of design and inve- ntion The paintings were drawn in swift stapdash black lines show a mixture of geometrical motifs cross lines scales chess board patterns row of dotted circles or of intersecting circles with almost naturalistic representations of leaves trees birds some times peacocks occasion ally, deer goats and jackals

In the Mewar region a large number of early village forming settlements belonging to a culture named after its types at Ahar near

Udaipur have been found in the valleys of the Banas and its tributaries Gilund (Udaipur) is another excavated site of this sulture There are several wares in the pottery of Ahar or Banas culture but most dist inctive in Black and Red Ware with profuse geometric decoration This pottery is delicately painted with dots oblique lines diamonds con centric lines in white in panels and otherwise There are certain liquid designs also such as wavy lines and spirals etc

An important contribution in filling the gap between the end of the copper age culture and the beginning of full fledged iron age in northern India was the discovery of the Painted Grey Ware Culture (1100 B C 600 B C) at Noh (Bharatpur) Jodhpura and Virat Nagar (Jaipur) The culture is named after its distinctive ceramic which is of fine clay thin well baked and in grey colour with designs in black Since Painted Grey Ware and its association with the Mahabharata has become a subject of considerable significance its discovery in Rajasthan is an important evidence in this context Jodhpura and Viratnagar from a part of ancient Matsyadesha while Noh represents the territory of Sursenas Both these regions are frequently mentioned in this epic As regards paintings it is generally executed in black or deep chocolate colours The brush used for painting in this ware is not very fine Strokes are thicker at the starting point and thiner towards the end In certain cases they are very thick groups of equal number of dots and parallel stroke which prove the use of multiple brush technique The painted designs in this pottery range from a simple band round the rim through a variety of oblique and criss cross lines to more specialized designs such as a row of sigmas a chain of short spirals concentric circles semicircles intersecting circles and *swastikas* etc The discovery from Noh of a complete dish with beautiful design representing river pattern is very rare specimen A conical terracotta dice in Painted Grey Ware and so also the lid of the same ware with painted bird is also noteworthy Thus on the basis of above mentioned facts as revealed from archaeological excavations we can have an idea of the beginning of the tradition of paintings in Rajasthan

As a matter of fact these early paintings of Rajasthan reveal religious parctices of ancient India which is represented by Swastika sun tree and river etc Certain secular designes are also executed in such a manner which need further interpretation Rajasthani painting durig

the period under review is the only source together the knowledge of aesthetic sense of the ancients

Notes

1 Prof V S Wakankar and his students of Vikram University Ujjain Shri O P Sharma Superintendent (Architecture Survey) Dr Satva Prakash Giriraj Kumar Jagat Narain Harphool Singh Dhaka Registering Officer (Antiquities) Archaeology and Museums Jaipur have discovered several hundred paintings in the rock shelters of Rajasthan beside the authors

2 The important excavation expeditions in Rajasthan were conducted under the guidance of Shri R C Agrawala, Prof B B Lal Shri B K Thaper Dr H D Sankalia

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Akbari within a short period of time albums full of portraits were prepared for the emperor[2] Jahangir was equally interested in portrait painting and had portraits of princes nobles and important people made for the royal **muraqqa** s and the **Jahangirnama**[3] He went to the extent of sending one of his favourite painters Bishndas to Persia in order to bring authentic likenesses of the Persian Shah and members of his family and court[4] Amongst marginal decorations in the royal **muraqqa** s assembled for Jahangir pictures of ordinary people chauri-bearer wine boy gem cutter jeweller sword maker book binder street vendor gardener juggler etc —have been noticed[5] But these are mostly nameless individuals whose identity has not been recorded for the posterity Though individual portraits of the royalty nobility intelligentia and theologists coming from the courts of Jahangir Shah Jahan Aurangzeb and the later *Mughals* are found in large numbers the *Mughal* court painters have hardly paid any attention to the people engaged in ordinary professions

The Kachchwaha rulers of Amber and Jaipur spent much of their time in the company of the Mughals—working in their courts and in distant provinces as governors and commanders The cultural norms of the Mughals were followed by the Rajput kings and chiefs of the Punjab Hill states whenever these did not clash with their own norms and conventions – and painting was actively patronised by most of them[6] After the building of the brand new capital of Jaipur in 1727 32 the Kachchwaha rulers made ample and conscious efforts to leave their mark on the cultural millieu by organising elaborate ateliers of **karkhanas** devoted to different forms of arts and crafts A large number of painters worked in the **Suratkhana** or the painting atelier of Jaipur and produced many paintings and illustrated manuscripts Apart from works of religious nature the painters produced albums of pictures of seasons months musical melodies erotic postures and above all portraits The Jaipur rulers Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh I (1751 1767) and his second son Sawai Pratap Singh (1778 1803) took particular interest in painting and kept their **Suratkhana** humming with intense activity Painters like Sahib Ram Ramji Das[7] Rupa Govinda etc produced many paintings and book illustrations including large and superlarge size portraits of the reigning kings still adorning the audience chamber of the Chandra Mahal Palace (presently the Art Gallery of the Museum)

The drawings under discussion may be classified into three categories—formal portraits outline drawings of persons and small thumb nail portraits with the face fully painted and the rest of the body indicated in thin lines and faint colours [8] Head and shoulder busts in the style of English miniatures have not been found The painters generally depict their subject in profile but with utmost care to make them throb with pulsating lif His repertoire is limited small pieces of thin hand made paper generally of Jaipur origin soft and fine brush a limited pallet of lamp black grey mauve pink green blue and white applied with great dexterity With his limited me ns he renders such a wide range of subjects with a rare sensitivity and sub le charm They all come out alive with the stamp of their individual character imprinted upon them These formal and informal portrait studies as stated earlier generally show the king and his court important officials visiting vass ls and chiefs along with white collar people doctors builders writers poets painters calligraphers jewellers and performing artis s like actors dancers singers and instrumentalis s and as the subject of our present concern ordinary people The last mentioned group include portraits of mahawats (elephant drivers) tailors khawases (personal retainers) barbers eunachs gardeners cooks time keepers and petty clerks In addition to these there are some caricature like painted sketches drawn with a rare sense of wit and sarcasm Such unabashed expression of riotously funny situati ns is rather unusual in any court atelier Through these drawings the artist appears as a warm hearted man with a sense of naughty humour [1]

In Fig 10 we notice Lalji Upadhyay an important Brahmin official seated with his head stooping forward counting his rosary [9] But Upadhayay s unusual pose is due to his addiction to drug—pure raw opium—which has apparently taken out the sap of life from his body His head looks disproportionately large with a hawk nose and formidable moustache his limbs lean and thin tors emaciated but his eyes have a penetrating look fixed in an aimless and meaningless gaze The inscription does not disclose the name of the painter but simply gives the name of the sitter as Lalji Upadhyay—the Opium eater This in comparable with the picture of Rao Raja Kishan Singh described as *baolo* the deranged one [10] The Rao Raja is a tall thick set stout and strong individual with an aristocratic bearing wearing a characteristic



Fig 10

head dress an elaborate jama and a pair of pearl and ruby ear rings His lotus petal eyes have an other worldly look The unknown artist has dealt with his 'sitter' with utmost sympathy and consideration (the words babat worl written on the back indicate that the drawing was deposited in the store at the Hawa Mahal)

The artist does not display any such sympathetic feeling in the drawing of an old Brahmin employee being beaten with shoes by three persons Fig 11 We do not know the specific crime of the helpless old man but feel sure about the gravity of his guilt calling for such drastic and *instant justice* Though we know nothing about the **dramatis personae** or the painter who has thought the episode important enough to preserve for the posterity but we amaze at his mastery in rendering such an upsetting subject which is so bitingly satirical

The 'Khawas or Khwas Chela though denoted nothing more than a personal retainer occupied an important position in Jaipur court life They wellded lot of power by virtue of their proximity to the King *Ghasi Khawas* a Brahmin by caste must have been a popular



Fig 11

figures as we have two portrait studies of him including one by the well known portrait painter Ramjidas Chatera (no 1051 76) [1] in the interesting study reproduced in Fig 12 Ghasi Khawas is shown in an embarrassing situation when his elaborately tied pagari had been pulled down by a young devil—identified in the inscription as Sheonarayanji s son—cosily seated in his lap [13] We do not know Sheonarayeanji s identity [14] but from the fact that Ghasi had to bear the prank of this young boy it appears that he was an important person having a Brahmin as khawas

The tailors (darji) were popular subjects to the Jaipur painter there are as many as thirteen inscribed portraits of tailors in the collection with some more probables amongst the unidentified lot Three of these show Nanag darji including one dated 1812 VS 1755 AD two of Megha darji two of Jiyo darji two of Chatarbhuj darji includin one by Ramjidas Chatera, where he is described as a son of Moti darji one of his father Motiram darji also by Ramjidas [15] where Motiram is described as a son of Radaram Khawas and another portrait study of a child called Ramlochan, son of Chaturbhuj darji In the study of

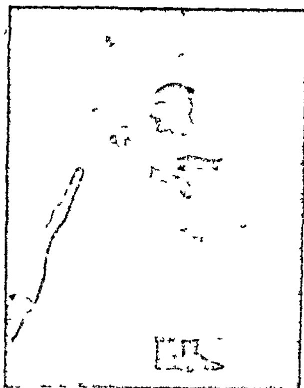


Fig 12

Rodaram the subject is identifi d as Rodaram darji khawas indicating the profession of a tailor and a khawas as inter changeable at times The portrait of an old tailor Devidas with a foot scale in his hand and a pair of scissors stuck in his kamarbandh Fig 13[16] is undoubtedly the most penetrating amongst the whole lot It was painted on Jeth Sudi 8 1829 V S that is in the middle of 1772 It is a remarkable drawing making it is one of the finest in the entire lot

Though there are more than one had a half dozen drawings and painted sketches of pakhwaj players sarangi players musicians and dancers including female performers of the zenana division known as bhagatans and patars [17] none is more sensitively portrayed than Rupo a young Vaishnava devotee shown as playing a pair of khartals[18] Fig 14 Drawn in a summary manner it shows only the head and torso of the subject upto the waist and does not make any attempt to show the lower portion of his body The face is sensitive and lively making it attractive and endearable, Another drawing prepared in a similar manner shows Bhagirathji Vaishnav (No AG 1043 76) The painter as



Fig 13

if wanting to settle his score against the high official Mohan Nader his depicted him as savouring a green cucumber Fig 15 a sarcastic depiction of an important dignitary [19] In this study the emphasis is not on the line, in fact the painter has made more use of colour washes than lines His purpose was to be little Mohan Nader which he has achieved with supreme ease

The barbers play an important role in any royal court The Jaipur painters have depicted same of them with usual verve and enthusiasm There are two portraits of Lalo nai (No 1407 76) and one each of Jodha (No 1031 76), Ramrikh (No 1349 76) Bakhat Ram



Fig 14

(No 1373 76) Gangaram (No 481 76) and Sitaram (No 1412 76) (Fig 16) Out of these Ramrikh is shown as tying the pagari of some body else Sitaram is standing with a mirror in his hands a trademark *for his profession He is immaculately dressed* with a *well tied pagri on* his head and tilak marks on his forehead The unknown artist has *concentrated on the facial expression of his subject* which is some what placid and mundane

In the last example illustrated here (Fig 17) *the artist has depicted an old man by the name of Kuberji whose distorted angular limbs and attenuated body resting uneasily on a staff crease a strange appeal to the viewer as he evokes sympathy and feeling* The drawing *is inscribed in a coarse careless hand picture of Kuberji* Jyeth Sudi 1 *Samvat 1813 but it does not mention the name of artist*

This group of drawings thus reveal many uncommon studies of common people who do not get so much of attention from artists of the royal surakhana Some examples of similar nature have been found at Bikaner Kishangarh Deccan and some centres of the Punjab Hills

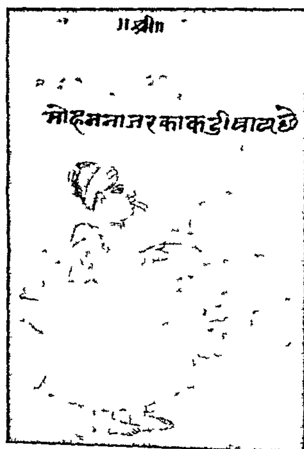


fig 15

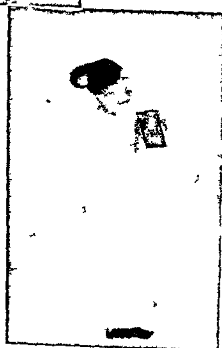


fig 16

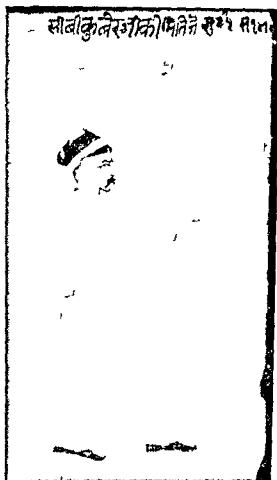


Fig 17

Postscript -Since writing this short the author came across a very informative paper On Some Portraits of Ordinary People by Prof B N Goswamv published in Arts of Himachal ed V C Ohri, Simal 1975 27 36 8 figures Prof Goswamy has drawn our attention to a group of inscribed portraits amongst the collection of Pahari drawings in the National Museum New Delhi He has mentioned about a large group of early fully finished portraits of Ordinary persons from the Mankot collection now in the Chandigarh Museum He however thinks that these were ordered by the ruler himself considering their uniformity in point of finish with the protraits of the nobility and the royalty of Mankot

Prof Goswamy has also referred to the existence of a 'very large number of portraits of persons other than nobles and men of royal s atus from the Sikh court of Sahore and in the company style both in the 19th century Beside these there are portraits of Chobdars and Chaprasis from Patiala belonging to the same category Amongst the portraits illustrated and described by Prof Goswamy there are Kanungos (or Qanungos) Brahmins warriors a Bania and of a painter called Golu Tarkhan, coming from a family of tarkhans or carpenters We agree with Prof Goswamy s concluding remarks which is almost equally applicable to the Jaipur situation But the real interest of these protraits resides not in their ability to tell us more about the styles of painting in the Pahari region it rests perhaps in their contri buting that all Pahari portraiture was centred around those who weil ded either power or wealth The painter also painted sometimes for his own reasons

Notes

1 Akbar s remarks are quoted by Abul Fazl in A in 34 of the A'in i Akbari called the A in in Taswir Khana It starts with the words —

Drawing the likeness (Shabih) of anything is called taswir (painting picturealising) Since it is an excellent source both of study and entertainment His Majesty from the time he came to an awareness of things has taken a deep interest in painting and sought its spread and development —

2 At his Majesty s command protraits have been painted of all of His Majes y s servants and a huge album (kitab) has been made Thus the dead has gained a new life and the living an eternity- Ain I Akbari I English translation by H Blochmann, Calcutta 1873 p 115

3 For a detailed study of Mughal painting during Jahangir s time vide Asok Kumar Das, Mughal Painting During Jahangir s Time Calcutta, 1976

4 Asok Kumar Das 'Bishndas Chhavi ed by Anand Krishna, Benaras 1971, 183 191 idem Mughal Painting During Jahangir s Time 192 195

5 Das op cit 124 ff

6 Asok Kumar Das Miniatures (of Jaipur) Marg XXX, No 1977,

77 94, 102, idem Treasures of Indian Painting Series One Jaipur 1977 plates 3 4 5 6 and text A K Coomaraswamy Catalogue of the Indian Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston Part V Rajput Painting Boston 1926 216 f

7 Asok Kumar Das Rajidas Chatera An Eighteenth Century Jaipur Painter in V S Srivastava, ed, Cultural Contours of India Delhi 1981, 317 323

8 S C Welch defines a drawing as 'essentially two diamentional work of art in any medium in which color is absent or subordinate —Indian Drawings and Painted Sketches New York 1976 14

9 No A G 437 76 size 14 5 x 8 5 cm

10 No A G 556 76 size 17 3 x 15 2 cm

11 No A G 718 76 size 27 8 x 18 8 cm

12 This is not listed amongst the works of Rajidas Chatera in the paper cited above No A G 1051 76

13 No A G 568 76 22 5 x 16 cm

14 in Sawai Pratap Singh s court there was an important official named Sheonaraın Misra A drawing of Sheonaraın Misra and Rai Chand made by Ramjidas is preserved in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh Museum vide Das Rajidas Chatera op cit 321 no 22 (AG 661 76) Reproduced C Singh Textiles and Costumes from the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Jaipur 1979 pl 10

15 Das Ramjidas Chatera, op cit 321 2(No A G 805 76 and 1180 76)

16 No A G 822 76 size 18 x 9 5 cm

17 Chandramani Sing Performing Artists from Amber and Jaipur Cultural Contours of India 324 328 pl XCVII c D s op cit pl XCI

18 No A G 1065 76 size 16 5 x 11 7 cm

19 No A G 1199 76 size 21 7 x 16 2 cm

Photographs by Sri S G Tewari

Courtesy Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Jaipur

Mughal Paintıng and ıts Interactıon wıth Rajasthan Paintıng and Emergence of the Jaıpur School

—Rıta Pratap*

Akbar (ruled 1556 1605 A D) founded an atelier of painters Special attention was paid to technical improvements and every effort was made through the employment of pure colours fine draughtsman ship realistic landscape and sumptuous marginal decorations to impart a richness to painting hitherto unkonwn [1]

The court historian Abu l Fazl noted More than a hundred painters have become famous masters of art whilst the number of those who approach perfection or those who are middling is very large This is especially true of the Hindus their pictures surpass our conception of things Few indeed in the world are found equal to them [2]

Abu l Fazl has further noted in Ani i Akbari that the Emperor was very pleased with the Hindu painters Basava Daswanath and Kesudas As the Hindu and Muslim painters collaborated actively, one drawing the outline the other filling in the colours the third doing the border the native painters learned the Persian manner and later even painted parallel pictures for the work of the Persian poet, Nizami and other foreign books.

On the other hand the Persian painters imbibed something of the depth of feelings of the Hindus This comes through the use of deeper colours for building trees foliage and characterisation of the face [3]

*Lecturer Drawing and Painting Maharani s College, Jaipur

Thus the Mughal school of painting began as an attempt of synthesis of the Persian Kalam and the native Hindu workmanship [4]

The Hamza Nama which was one of the first set of paintings done by the painters between 1567 72 had 1400 pictures in fresco like cloth paintings in which red blue and green colours predominate The plains the pink eroded rocks the vegetation and blossoming plum and peach trees are reminiscent of Iran Indian tones begin to appear only in later works as Indians joined hands with the Persian master painter Mir Sayyid Ali [5] Glimpses of Rajasthani influence in Mughal paintings are seen in Hamza nama a picture showing giant Zamurud asleep in dramatic Indian wall style painting with two women on a well in an upper corner wearing Rajasthani clothes In the painting Parrot at Court by the prolific Basavan Rajasthani buldings are depicted In the painting showing Akbar hunting the complex scene has an European sense of *volume and light and shade mixed with Persian high* horizon and Hindu emphasis on the emotion-charged drama In the Siege of Ranthambhor the formal Persian miniature is released into the dynamic Hindu flow

Akbar ordered his artists to illustrate the Hindu epics This led to the creation of the illustrated **Mahabharata** called **Razm nama** now in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Jaipur It contains 169 full page paintings some of the greatest of this period and was completed in *1589 A D* The **Ramayana** was also translated into persian and illustrated [6]

Painters came to work for Akbar from Lahore (e g Lallu Lahori) Gujarat (e g Sur Kesar and Bhim Gujarati) Gwalior (e g Nand Gwaliori) Kashmir (e g Ahmad Kashmiri) and without doubt from adjacent areas of Rajasthan and U P From a study of the names we know that nearly four fifths of the total number of painters were Hindus [7]

Examples of joint productions with the outline designed by well known masters like D swanth Basawan Kesav the elder Lal Mishkina Ramdas *etc are common in the* historical biographical and religious works like the **Tasira I Kkandani Timuriyya** the **Babarnama** **Akbarnama** and of course the great manuscripts of **Razmnama** and **Ramayana** [8]

Daswanth was regarded as matchless in his time and most excellent In designing drawing of features colouring portrait painting and other species of art Basawan was considered unique

The Mughal ˬ ative Indian elements distinguished from its decorative Persian prototypes by an extended sense of space and an agitated action rarely seen in Persian Art The finest examples of Mughal painting are not only lively and realistic but contain elements of individual portraiture These distin ctive qualities not only continue in later Mughal painting but eventually affect Rajput art as well [9]

In course of time it was inevitable that the mental outlook of the Indian artists would make itself felt and this in fact happened The arabesque of Persian art resolved itself into a line of different quality and tempo and so also the colour scheme took on a different pattern The emphasis on a purely decorative art began to disappear and a new realism crept in [10]

The Mughal painting achieved volume and mass like Ajanta A thin shading also the outline with colour contrasts to give relief to the mass the soft modelling especially of the arms are reminiscent of Ajanta Herman Goetz feels that artists from Gwalior who joined Akbar s atelier introduced these features as well as the lancet as opposed to the almond type of eye [11]

The diff rence Mughal art and Rajput art which was emerging at the same time need allusion Rajput art was a reflection of great epic and lyrical tradition It was a romantic art distinct in character but not in technique from Mughal art with a larger sweep of imagina tion corresponding to a larger variety and range of contemporary literary forms The Bhakti songs of medieval Indian poets and saints unconscious of their burden of beauty naive and undorned ecstatic and tender inspired this art It is Krishna Lila it is Kabir Mira Bai and Vidhyapati in line and colour [12] High lyrical fervour in the robust rhythm of colour is seen in Rajput painting

According to Coomaraswamy,[13] Mughal painting even when more refined than Hindu painting is a by way rather than a highway art it is essentially an art of portraiture and a dated art which is as much as to say a placed art The Mughal portrait is a delightful mosaic of colour The line is accurate alive the modelling delicate

and subtle executed with a fine brush Th portraits betray the artists profound insight into human character Jahangir (ruled 1605 27) was a connoisseur of painting and took keen personal interest in this art The painter was invariably with him on all important occasions like court, durbars *royal hunting trips and even wars*[14] *Tarachand Jagannath* and Sanwal Das specialised in depicting battle scenes Bishandas (regarded by Jahangir as unequalled in his age in the field of verisimili tude) Manohar and Goverdhan (painters of *gorgeous court scenes*) Bichitr (fine portrait painter) and Padarath (animal painter) were some of the other distinguished Hindu artists An outstanding feature of the painting of this period is superb border decoration which is usually an arabesque with hunting scenes birds and animals picnic parties music and dancing and people engaged in various professions Certain elements such as the suggestion of perspective and naturalistic treatment of landscape in the paintings of this period show a definite influence of contemporary European painting Portrait painting was done from life In the court scenes however the portraits of the grandees were apparently made from the tracings kept in the atelier[15] The fine lyrical Persian brush work modulated the emotional hot colours Ochre reds yellows purple mauves were diversified and diluted into soft blues, greys, and greens pink and whites and the predominantly European three dimensional technique began to be adopted frequently In the portraits delicate toning and modelling were introduced as well as shad*ing This helped to bring out the character of the person portrayed* The delicacy and finish attained great sensitiveness[16]

A *study of a large number of* Mughal portraits shows that these resolve themselves into two definite methods of representation one in which the features are depicted in rigid profile and the other in which they are drawn in what is known as the three quarter face The two styles emerge at the same time progress side by side and in the end the rigid profile ousts the three quarter view and becomes the accepted method of depicting the features in all later portraiture[17]

In ' Jahangir at the Tomb of Moinuddin Chisti there is a transition from the Persian Kalam towards the drama of the native style the multiple planes on which the early Rajasthani pictures were composed are effectively fused there with the Persian high horizon.[18]

Jahangir greatly admired the work of Abul Hasan and Mansur Mansur who styled himself Naqqash for his extremely minute work was

a leading animal bird painter whose Kalam was regarded as naturalistic [19]

Of Abul Hasan Jahangir wrote ' Truly he has become Nadir-uz Zaman (the wonder of the age) His work was perfect He drew the picture of Jahangir s accession as the *front ispiece* to the Jahangir-nama [20]

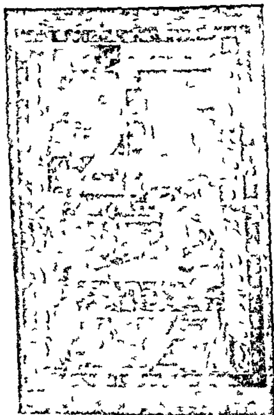


Fig 18

Jahangir with his wife *which is a study of the Zenana in the palace depicts a garden and balcony adapted from Rajasthani painting*

In the Jahangir s India painting became more widely diffused *Many Mughal grandness Rajput nobles* and to some extent even merchants employed painters trained in the Mughal atelier Though their work was not of a very high order, they laid the foundations of a new

category of painting which is known as popular Mughal in which though the technique was basically Mughal Rajasthani elements were freely introduced [21]

Emergence of the Jaipur School

According to Amritrai s manuscript **Man charita** beautiful pictures of animals birds and flora plants were painted on the walls of Amber Palace of Man Singh (ruled 1590 1614 A D) Narottam Kavi also gives details of the **Ragamala Krishnalila Amaru Sataka Nayak Nayika Bheda** etc painted in the palace walls in bright red yellow and green [22] A few panels of wall paintings have been discovered at Man Singh s palace at Amber Fort [23] They show Krishna playing the flute or grazing cows with the gopis The gopis and slim and well proportioned don a striped **Lehanga** and **Choli** The female figures are almost in popular Mughal style and similar to **Rasikpriaya** fragments in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston in the **Madhavanala Kamakandal Chaupai** fragments in the Berlin Museum and in the *Ramayana* fragments in the Prince of Wales Museum Bombay [24] Sarvu Doshi has traced on illustrated **Yasodhara Charit** Manuscript (1591 A D) of Amber in a style not far from the main stream of Jain miniature style [25]

The painters working for Raja Man Singh s Suratkhana also followed the same norms and produced paintings in a style not far from that of the so called popular Mughal style Raja Man Singh s interest in painting is further confirmed from trace of painting found in Makhdoom Shah s Maqbara the ruined tower at Mauzumabad and in the Gaurishanker Mahadev Temple at Baikatpur in Bihar [26]

Wall paintings (1586 A D) have also been found at the Mughal Garden at Bairath (between Jaipur and Alwar) and Mauzamabad (birth place of Man Singh) The paintings have a variety of subjects including mythological scenes **Ragamala** the Krishna theme wrestlers elephants camels **Laila Majnu** themes and scenes depicting dance parties

The paintings which were directly executed on stone in the chhatri of Raja Man Singh (erroneously hitherto called the chhatri of Raja Bharmal) are also extremely interesting These were done in C 1650 A D [27] (Fig 19)



Fig 19

The influence of Mughal painting is evident in several panels but such influence is translated into a local Rajasthani idiom The figures have atpatti puggries and Jamas with four points Thus placing *them during the late Akbari or early Jahangiri period* Raja Bhao Singh (1614–21 A D) besides erecting the cenotaph for Man Singh and executing the paints in it had wall paintings done at Bhavpura

The only state with which Mughals had intimate relations was Amber home of Akbar s favourite wife Maryam az Zamani his best *General Man Singh and Jahangir s second wife The illustration in* **Hamza** Nama gives clear evidence of the influence of early Rajasthani painting The two female figures are unlike those found in any Mughal painting and are distinctly Rajput [28]

In the famous **Razm Nama** completed for Akbar in 1588 A D the Hindu style elements are different from the **Safavid** tradition They are intelligible only on the assumption of a fargoing absorption of Rajput style elements. That these Hindu elements in Akbari Mughal paintings come from Amber can be proved by the fact that the earlier figure of Hindu ladies therein wear the same costume as those of the ladies of Maryam az zamani s household whereas later figures (since 1600) often show a different type i e the Jodhpur custom of the retinue of Jahangir s first wife Jodha Bai (mother of Shah Jahan)

The origin of the style is not yet ascertained It cannot be much earlier than 1580 A D i e the date of Hari Deoji temple at Goverdhan It is evidently based on the Rajput tradition of the time as we know from the Jails of Man Singh palace and the Bundela **Ragamala** But its principal characteristics stem from Indo Muslim painting in Malwa (most of the territory of which had been taken over by the Rajputs) also other contributing elements have to be taken into account early Jaunpur and Bengali even Deccani and via those later Vijayanagari

To the early Kachhawaha school of Bhagwandas reign (1573 1589 A D) we may ascribe especially the **Ragamala** manuscript **Laud** which Khandalavala and Motichandra have attributed to Bijapur although the figures are identical with those of Jaipur **Razm Nama** (Persian translation of Mahabharata) from Akbar s studio and even with those of Rajput and Rajput is in the siege scenes of Ranthambor and Chittorgarh in the Akbar Nama of the Victoria and Albert Museum London Some of its miniatures must be very early around 1580 A D Their composition still is very simple and s and not far from the Bundela primitives but the technique is already much more refined and detailed There still lingers something of the tension and expressionistic emotionalism of those Bundela works and yet the general affect is rather cool, more vivid than exalted [9]

Mirza Raja Jai Singh (1621 67 A D) was very close to Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb His love for literature art and architecture is seen in the collection of Sanskrit manuscripts of celebrated poets like Biharidas Narottam and Kulapati Misra and in the magnificent palaces and buildings constructed by him in Amber, Agra and elsewhere The painters in Mirza Raja s court introduced idioms of Mughal architec ture, male costume and general composition and decoration of the

Mughal painting in Jahangir's later and Shah Jahan s early reign But fundamentally the miniatures conserved the simplicity the Rajput female costume the more sweeping character of lines the more contracted colours the flatness of the figures the lack of perspective the strictly geometrical composition of Rajput tradition as is shown by miniatures in the Baroda Museum [30] Two copies of Rasikapria and Krishna Rukmini Veli were prepared in 1636 A D for one of his Maharanis Chandrawati These contain several designs and a couple of illustra tions of Krishna with gopis in a folk style

The Kachhawaha princes assumed the fashions of the Mughal court At home they employed local painters who struck to stereotype emotional or introvert Rajasthani themes Later came the symbiosis of the two styles Thus from the primitivism of the Rasika priya pictures to the refinement of the portraits there is a clear advance the drawing is more sensitive the colours and line are mellower and the whole outlook is refined

In the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum are preserved a few mutilated folios of a manuscripts written in Nagri script There is a miniature which has a likeness of Mirza Raja Jai Singh This dama ged miniature resembles the Mughal style of the late 17th century with intimate character study fine line work and mellow colour scheme

A 34 feet long scroll illustrated with drawings and designs based the Surdas poems is preserved in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum library The style is close to the folk style of the Rasikapriya and the wall paintings of Amber Flat colours have been used against the backgroud of pools and fountains trees and shrubs and simple architecture

During the reign of Raja Ram Singh I (1667 1689) A D a 465 feet long horoscrope[31] of Kanwar Kishan Singh was prepared (Fig 20) The horoscope is painted in the Mughal court style and depicts stars planets dieties etc Ram Singh I Kishan and Bishan Singh have been executed in a style close to the contemporary Mughal court style

In the time of Sawai Jai Singh (1699 1743 A D) Jaipur pain ting began to emerge as an independent school The court records in State Archieves Bikaner indicate the Mughal painters like Fazil Muha

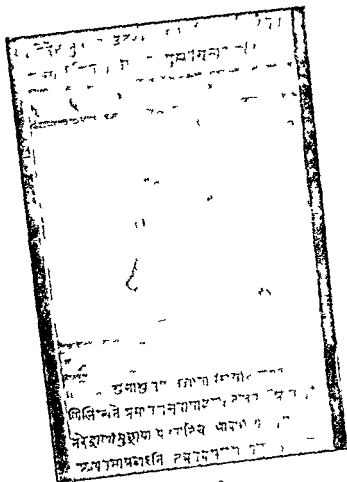


Fig 40

mmad and Sadeq Muhammad were brought by Sawai Jai Singh from Delhi After the establishment of the scientifically planned Jaipur city in 1727 A D Jai Singh invited eminent craftsmen and artists to settle down in Jaipur Jai Singh organised the Suraikhana and the distinct Jaipur school of painting burgeoned

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Mewar Painting As A Source of History

Ram Vallabh Somani*

Rajasthan is famous for its rich tradition of figurative art The portraits and other palettes dealing with some important events can be termed as an important source of the political history It is beyond doubt that attempts were made by the artists to bring out the ogne-resembiant figures in coeval portraits Therefore we may take them as an important source of history Individuallity of the rulers chiefs and other citizens can be judged by these works of art Some palettes depict ing notable events were executed in Mewar In 1708 when the rulers of Amber and Marwar were not allowed to regain their ancestral states by Emperor Bahadur Shah I they came in Mewar seeking the assistance of Maharana Amar Singh II In a contemporary painting now in possession of Victoria Museum Melbourne (Australia) the Maharana is shown with Maharaja Jaisingh of Amber, Ajitsingh of Marwar and Rathor Durgadas The inscription has a detailed description of the events Rathor Durgadas remained in Mewar for a considerable time during the regime of Maharana Sangram Singh II In more than 8 paintings Rathor Durgadas together with his sons have been shown This proves the fact that Rathor Durgadas after having been expelled from Marwar enjoyed a respectable position in Mewar A palette depicting large scale festivities was executed in 1722 A.D at the time of the birth of a grandson (Maharana Pratap II) to Maharana Sangram Singh II The marriage ceremonies of Maharana Raj Singh II together with his uncle Arisingh were arranged at Gogunda in 1754 with great ostentation A big palette showing cavealeades of marriage party together with other festivities was executed at the same time by the 3 artists of Mewar A large inscription in the back side of the above painting gives manifold

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*Kalyan ji ka Rasta Jaipur

details about the social system then prevalent in higher Rajput classes During the reign of Maharana Arisingh Maharaja Vijay Singh of Marwar came to Udaipur During his return journey Biramdeva Medatiya of Ghanerao and Biramdeva Solonky of Desuri met him at Ghanerao Their historical meeting has been preserved in contemporary painting now preserved with Kr Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh During the reign of Maharana Bhimsingh Medatiya Ajitsingh came to Mewar and remained with the Maharana for a few months Two big palette of Ghanerao contain the details that the Ghanerao chiefs differences wi h Maharaja Man Singh of Marwar were reconciled through Amir Khan The Pindari chief deputed his officer who persuaded the Thakur to come to Jodhpur with his subordinate chiefs The inscription from the painting says that Maharaja Mansingh came to receive them upto Ratanada Col James Tod remained in Mewar as Political Agent during the reign of Maharana Bhimsingh His meetings with Maharana in a Durbar and on other occasions have been shown in many paintings

It is beyond doubt that the field of paintings is very vast They supply ample material for socio economic studies also Change of dresses head gear and Jamas can very well be studied by them If we take the example of Mewar we find that after Shah Jehani turban Maharana Sangram Singh II adopted small turban It was changed to Khanjandar by Arisingh Maharana Sardar Singh changed it adopting a new turban which too was altered by Maharana Fateh Singh The personal life of the rulers queens modes of amusement shikar group scenes religious life etc , can also be studied by these paintings

Painting As A Source of History of Rajasthan-Its Limitations

V S Bhatnagar*

Rajasthan has rich tradition of painting going back to the early mediaeval period The earliest paintings are found in the illustrated manuscripts at the folk level in phad etc The literary sources also refer to portraits and wall paintings in the early mediaeval period From the 16th Century we have a continuous record of painting activity and the evolution of the different styles which emerged in different parts of Rajasthan can be minutely studied and observed The painting activity from the late 16th century to almost the close of the 18th century was rich and varied in the states as well as at the folk level

While discussing painting as a source of history, there arises need to define history Obviously we have to take the term in the wider sense and not merely in the political or military Its social religious and cultural aspects too have to be given their due place and history should be taken in the sense of being things done by man in the past and which help us in knowing what man is It is in this sense that the paintings furnish a rich data useful for a social historian about dress fashions religion climate cultural trends indeals of beauty sex pleasures etc of an age in which painting is drawn However paintings like events acquire historical importance posthumously though it is not necessary that each and every painting would acquire it Besides paintings have value as pure art and level of excellence of art is indicative of the aesthetic level of the people of an age

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*Reader in History, University of Rajasthan Jaipur

However every source of historical information has certain limitations whether it is a diary or a letter or a document In each mind of the author plays a vital role and we get information to the extent and in the form the author of the document or letter is inclined to reveal or is capable of revealing the facts In painting also except in rare cases we get a pre selected and pre-determined picture by people consciously or unconsciously imbued with a particular view

The value of painting as a source of history is limited by some other factors also, some of which are peculiar to aesthetics in general One of these factors is stylization which affects genuineness of the portrayal In portrait paintings faithfully representation or likeness is crucial to its being a source of history but stylization cuts at the very roots of authenticity and validity of portrait becomes open to question The shortcoming is very clear in the portraits of Kota and Jodhpur rulers and to some extent of Mewar but much less of Jaipur

Another factor which affects value of painting as a source of history is the bias of the painter in respect of features background theme of the painting etc The bias in an artist can as much hide and distort the reality as it would in a historian writing history Bias leads to selectiveness and selectiveness affects the authenticity of the portrayal In history authenticity is its very soul In some of the Rajput paintings painters brought up in Muslim social atmosphere are found showing Krishna and Radha in Muslim apparel Realism in the Rajasthani paintings is also affected by the tendency to exaggerate the effect This is seen in the portrayal of battle scenes and also in the paintings in which the painter wants to highlight the grandeour of his patron as we find in the paintings of the Darbars

In manuscript paintings which are seldom contemporaneous the painter is conscious that he is portraying a scene or a figure of the past times and he tries to go back imaginatively to those times while drawing the dress or department of the characters he is portraying and yet he cannot go that far back nor in his attempt to go back he can portray the trends of his own times and thus neither paints the past nor present correctly For a historian it becomes difficult to treat the man uscript paintings which often deal with religious or mythological themes as giving a reliable data or social or cultural impost which may be said to be characteristic of the age depicted by a particular painting

Paintings often lack contemporaneousness since the painter himself is not present He is generally creating an image which may acquire lastingness for instance the portrait of Prithviraj Chauhan or of Pratap it is probably based on literary version but literary version itself might have been possibly idealistic without having reliable relation with actuality and therefore has doubtful historical value The idealis tic element enters a painting often unconsciously and soon pervades is every line and every shade of colour In interpreting paintings as a source of history margin therefore has to be kept for the shortcomings which painting like any other source does have partly on account of its inherent nature and partly due to external factors

Goverdhan wall Painting as a Source of Bharatpur History

—Jyotsna Pande*

Goverdhan is situated in Uttar Pradesh at the borders of Rajasthan It is a religious place Some Chhatris were erected in the memory of former rulers of Bharatpur State and some temples were constructed by Jat rajas Surajmal s Darbar wall painting at Goverdhan in Surajmal Chhatri illustrated his displeasure with Jawahar Singh that as the Maharaja held his Darbar in an up storey room Jawahar Singh was not allowed to appear before him, stands at the entrance of the lower storey checked by the gateman The another picture painted is that of Delhi s loot by the Jats in which they are shown ravaging Delhi The third picture of Jawahar Singh standing at Jawahar burj of Bharatpur fort with some angry eyes towards Delhi which is painted in a nearby painting Some other paintings are faded These paintings are attributed of late 18th Century Ram Pande s **Bharatpur upto 1826** is refered for further reading

*Dept of Hindi, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

Wall paintings Their Scientific Conservation

Hot Chand*

Rajasthan is extantly rich in wall paintings Their execution in caves buildings palaces and monuments had been in practice from prehistoric times to this day The primitive paintings are done on the rocks without any priming or ground The paintings at one of the kiosks of sixteenth century monument at Amber are executed on grey stone primed with single coat of lime wash Small paintings (drawings and sketches) exposed from layers of white wash and plaster at Amber palaces are done directly on the stone The technique and style of Fresco paintings at palaces buildings cenotaphs and monuments in Rajasthan are extensively described by many authors The technique seem to have been incorporated from earlier Italian Frescoes or elsewhere from south India where the art of fresco buono was known during the Chola and Nayak dynasties In this method colours are mixed in lime water or plaster that are made to sink into the wet plaster of the wall through a manual process of beating burnishing and polishing Colours are absorbed by lime and plaster in their interestices These are further strengthened by the sorption of carbon dioxide while getting dry As a result of the carbonation of the lime the paintings become as durable as the building yet not immune to ravages of time nature and vandalism

Palaeolithic caves of Altamira (Spain) Lascaux (France) Bhimbetka (India) and others are known to us by the astonishing luck of their survival Prehistoric paintings discovered inside caves rocks and catacombs were found in a good equilibrium stage with their environment until sealed but when these tombs were excavated and opened these could

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sustain environmental changes for a few decades only Imagine all the great works of Italian Renaissance painting-the Sistine ceiling the stange of Raphael, the Brancacci Chapel the Monalisa too have been destroyed Wall paintings on the protected forts, palaces cenotaphs and monuments were in better state of preservation But the vulnerable point commenced when some activities like their use for copying and illuminating for study engraving and writing the names and dates cooking and dwelling white washing and over painting renovating and restoration etc were carried out These places turned gradually into tourist places for picnic and excursion expeditions Thus it is obvious that quantum of damage is more due to neglect and human vandalsm Environmental changes has affected the paintings existing at the facade of Ganesh Pole at Amber Palaces by causing flaking building and peeling off plaster layer Some yogis used the four rooms of the monument Mughal Gate at Virat Nagar for cooking with the result cotemporary wall paintings disappeared in the soot Mughal portraits wild animals and other figures executed at the facade are at their decline stage due to rains winds, sunlight and ravages of time

The application of science[1] in the examination and conservation of wall paintings is reported mainly during this century Italian restorers used synthetic adhesive and varnishes for protection of wall paintings of Ajanta caves[2] Their contribution in preserving wall paintings inside caves churches and catacombs were based on the use of fixatives solvents restrainer and adhesives. They could explore various causes of deterioration by the help of experimentation and subsequently evolved out several instruments for monitoring The method of conservation have been perfected so more so that the paintings inside catacomb can be photographed through a small aperture in the roof before the tomb is actually opened An airconditioned monitoring chamber made below the level of the tomb in Japan is found most efective for preservation of its wall paintings The damage due to change in temperature relative humidity sunlight and air pollution at the entry of visitors could be avoided by the ground access to the cave under controlled conditions The use of paraloid B 72 in Chloretene is found effective for preservation of wall paintings in 90 100 percent humid tombs Wall paintings from the places under flood fire and earthquake or unsafe conditions have been successfully transferred on

flexible supports Faint and faded wall paintings of Raja Mansingh Cenotaph at Amber[3] are made distinct and preserved by the application of 5 10 percent polyvinyl acetate in toluene Care has to be taken that the surface should not be contaminated with any dust dirt or soot Wall paintings covered under smoke at Mughal Gate[4] were cleaned by the help of teepol liquor Ammonia Methyl alcohol and distilled water mixuture The fresco paintings covered under lime wash layers were exposed mechanically taking help of polyvinyl acetate as fixative An interesting panel depicting seven figures composing shaiva theme was exposed elaborately in Mansingh Palace at Amber (see Fig 21 22) While attempting exposing a typical example of ove done paintings has also been preserved in this appartment The panel of Lord Ganesh at Ganesh Pole[5] was consolidated by injecting a mixture of lime casein fevicol and marble dust The fresco paintings at the facade of this pole are also given consolidation and restoration treatment using thin and thick pasts of the above mixture

Wall paintings damaged as a result of flood[6] are preserved by the help of ammonium carbonate solution Biodeterioration of murals is stopped by the use of Nystatin Synthetic products like soluble Nylon Polyvinyl acetate poly butyl metha crylate and Barium aluminate[7] are found effective for reattachment of flaked paint visibility of faded paintings and consolidation of fragile pigment layers respectively

The use of scientific instruments like emission and X ray spect rometer infrared spectrometer along with sodium fusion and organic functional group analyses are reported for identification and determina tion of components of paintings The presence of gelatin and gum based binding media and calcium carbonate and ochre in the paint layer suggest that the wall painting is done in fresco technique [8]

Scientific conservation of these wall paintings followed by restoration and reintegration for their completion should focus to their ethics and aesthetics Restoration must be confined only to provide prolonged life without altering the originality in their text and texture although it can not be assessed in absolute terms

Fig 21

Fig 22

Notes

1 Hotchand Science in the examination and conservation of works of Art **Conservation of Cultural Property in India** Vol XI 1978 pp 45-47

2. J C Nagpal The problem of Chemical conservation of Ajanta Paintings **Conservation of Cultural Property in India** Vol XII 1979 pp 21 58

3 Hotchand Conservation of Wall paintings in Rajasthan **Conservation of Cultural Property in India** Vol VII 1974 pp 66 68

4 Idem Conservation of Wall Paintings of Mughal Gate, Virat Nagar Ibid Vol VIII 1975 pp 50 52

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6 Hamblin, Dora Jane Science finds way to restore he art damage in Florence **Smithsonian** 4 (ii) 1974 pp 26 35

7 Matteini M and Mobs A Barium aluminates for the consolidation of Mural paintings **Icom** Committee for conservation Zagreb 1978 15 (5) 1978 pp 1 10

8 V J Birstein A Study of organic components of paints and grounds in Central Asia and Crimean wall paintings **Icom** Comittee for Conservation Venice 1975 1 (10) pp 1 10

Military System of the Rajputana States

Ram Pande

The armies of the princely States of Rajputana was not a later origin as some people are apt to think on account of its late modernization in the wake of British Indian Army During the early mediaeval period the military leaders like Rana Kumbha Sanga were of note and in the Mughal period the system has produced the great military leaders like Rana Pratap Raja Man Singh Raja Maldeo, Mirza Raja Jai Singh, Jaswant Singh Durga Das etc

The system of military was based on the Bhaichara of the ruling princes They conqured territories consolidated them and defended from external attacks The Rajas created the system which can be better termed as hereditary military services The jagirdars, who were Raja s own kins (Bhaibandh) required to maintain an army in lieu of jagir They were also required the management of cultivated land in peace and military services in the times of invasion campaign and defence of the territory The huge forts and fortresses were erected to serve as garrisons These forts were always eracted at some strategic points and were considered the strong points of defence with traditional arms

After the death of Aurangzeb the Mughal Empire began to decline The most important event was the rise of the Marathas and their insurgency to north The infighting Rajas of this region could not resist the insurgent Marathas So a new turn came in the military system of Rajputana States of hiring the mercenary troops The Rajputs hired French, Afghans, Vilayatis Sikhs etc They also hired the Marathas to settle their own house affairs

The pre British military system of the Rajputana States become mainly composed of hereditary Jagirs Jamiyat and Mercenaries The main branches of the army were infantry cavalry artillery camel and elephant corps The matchlocks swords daggers and lances were the main arms of infantry The cavalry who has numerous categories was to follow the army The artilery of the most of the States was not in the proper condition either because of their week financial resources or non availability of proper persons to use it The system of branding *of the horses and camels and their verification was in practice*

In 1818 the British East India Company approached the rulers of the Rajputana States for alliance of mutual friendship but with sub sidiary position The rulers accepted the British as their paramount power in place of the Mughals According to the treatise concluded with the princely states of Rajputana the rulers were to maintain an army to serve under the British beyond their frontiers In 1899 the British Government entered into agreements with several Rajput rulers for the effective control and discipline of the Imperial Service Troops maintained by the states This resulted in the modernization of the State forces rapidly on the British pattern The feudal or hereditary levies were replaced by the standing armies It brought about the change in the system of giving training drilling recrui ment payment of the salaries and mess system etc

While the civil administration of the Rajputana States and their socio economic conditions were started to be modelled on new lines as a sequal to a net work of salutary reforms their military organisations were left practically unchanged which survived in its essential features as a mediaeval relic The Rajas themselves were Jagirdars of the Mughal Emperors The hereditary Jagirdars were maintaining the horses the number of which was fixed or decided by the ruler as required There was no fixed uniform and they were not required to face any short of training performances Raja was keeping his own army also This *has the divisons like Elephant and Horse unit Paltan and Infantry* divisions Besides this a separate establishment of Forts Guards was also there The mercenary troops cared only for money Writing in 1868 Col Brooks said about the Jaipur army consisted of ten regi ments of foot each 60 strong and 4000 nagas as men ill armed and without dicipline besides a small body of 700 cavalry divided into seven rissalas and 4250 Jagirdar horses There are besides 1500 men employed in guarding the several forts within the territory Speaking generally

the Rajputanan Army as it survived till the late of ninteenth century was manifestly out of date and unsuitable for the new type of warfare or military campaign caused by the impact of European military system

We read that during the British reign the armies of the Rajputana states fought in all the major and minor campaigns The Jodhpur Lancers and the Ganga Risala took part in the Chinese war Later on the Ganga Risala which was sent to Somalia for suppressing the mutiny played a prominent part 'During the world war I the Sardar Risala fought in France and the Jaipur Transport Corps was employed in the middle east The Jaipur State Transport Corps played an important role in winning the battle of Shaiba and captured innumerable enemy weapons and equipment This was the only service corps unit in the whole history of the army of our study which has won a battle honour In the second world war the Ist Bn Jaipur Infantry Sawai Man Guards and Jodhpur Sardar Infantry operated against the Germans in Italy and in the Middle East Bijay Battery Jodhpur Lancers Joy Paltan Alwar Mewar Infantry Kotah Ummed Infantry and Jaipur Pony Company participated in the eastern sector These armies were considered better for garrison duties training establishments and demostration purposes

On the formation of the Greater Rajasthan all the forces of *the covenanting states varying in size skill armaments and status were* consolidated in one solid force under the distinguished leadership of late Sawai Man Singh II who was a rare combination of a soldier statement and administrator As the Rajpramukh of the Greater Rajasthan he was the highest authority in the military matters After that this system was amalagated with Indian Armed Forces

In above lines an attempt has been made to survey briefly the past record of the military system of the Rajputana States

The archival material at the State Archives at Bikaner and its branches at Jaipur Kota Alwar Bharatpur Udaipur etc, the records at National Archives of India are also of some value and Administrative Reports of various Rajputana States would form the source material for this The Paintings such as depicting dress and arms of Rajput Military (Fig 23) Partrait of Battle of Gagwana, and of a stratagic

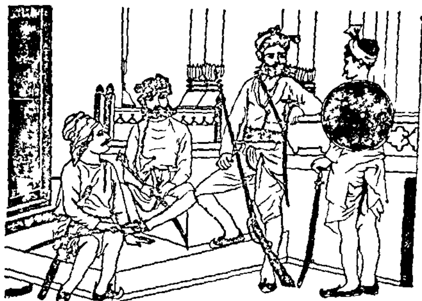


Fig 23

like chakraview (defence) Makrview (offensive) etc also form the part of material The paintings of the sieges of the two important forts like Ranthambhor and Chittorgarh are also available In one of the *painting the drilling army is shown but since there is no inscription so* it is difficult to say about its time But we should be conscious enough about its short comings at the time of use

The History of the Game of Chaugan in the State of Amber-Jaipur Specially as Evidenced from a Study of Paintings

Yaduendra Sahai*

The tradition of Chaugan in this region can be traced to the beginning of the eleventh century during the reign of Raja Pajjavanaraya (or Pajun) who was the fourth descendant of Dulaharaya and a General of Prithvi Raj Chauhan of Delhi Prithvi Raj was a keen player too So naturally Pajun being one of the leading Generals of the Chauhan king must have shared his king s passion in the game There is a chaugan at Amber which has been in existence for as long as the Kachhawas have been in harness When the white wash was removed from certain portions of the zenana mahals of Raja Man Singh I at Amber many wall paintings of his period were uncovered Among them below a chejja between two of the todis in the middle of the ground floor north wall of the north western Zanana sarkar of the zanana mahal complex a wall paintings of a horse rider in a swashbuckling pose with the chaugan raised high above his head ready to hit the ball towards the hal is also found This may be regarded as an evidence that Raja Man Singh I was indeed a patron of the game of chaugan if not himself a player of it

Mirza Raja Jai Singh I was a patron or a keen player of chaugan is proved by the fact that his court poet Behari Lal in one of the couplets of the famous Sat Sai has very casual like used the game of chaugan and the happenings therein to illustrate a situation in everyday life of the region he knew so well We have only one painting

* Keeper Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum City Palace Jaipur

of this period from this region that show a game of chaugan in progress. Very faint traces of this wall paintings is today visible in a monument in old Amber, just south of the Bahari Darwaza

Sawai Jai Singh II was of course a keen player of the game He constructed a chaugan in juzta position to his palace in his newly constructed planned city and his buildings the viewing burjs and windowed passages including a latticed burj (motiburj) for the ladies of his zanana proves beyond doubt that the game of chaugan was not only popular with the males but the females of his Jaynagar also took keen interest in witnessing the game Besides this there is literary evidence to prove that he played a game of chaugan against his father in law when he visited the latter at his home in Mewar But the most direct evidence of the game of chaugan being played at Jaipur during the times of Jai Singh II is won from the several miniature paintings some in the personal collection of the Maharaja of Jaipur and others in some collections outside the country as in Berlin and elsewhere One of the paintings show four ladies on different elephants engaged with a totally different type of chaugan playing chaugans with long handles One is reminded of the 16th century sculptural friezs in the temple near Udaipur which shows a similar scene Thus it is clear that even ladies played at chaugan and besides horses even elephants were sometimes used by way of bringing variation in the normally played game For people to think up variations to a game one has to agree that a stage must have come when too much exposure to the viewing of the game must have forced the people to think up of forms of variations to break the monotomy

No chaugan painting of Maharaja Sawai Ishwar Singh and Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh I period belonging to Jaipur School have come to light to date but we cannot rule out the fact that the game of chaugan was popular during their times However as is evident from a study of the eleven large sized paintings by Uda Lal Pohekar Sahib Ram and others displayed by the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum in the exhibition Sawai Jai Singh and his City and The Literary Heritage of the Rulers of Jaipur and Amber it becomes clear that Sawai Iswari Singh and after him Sawai Madho Singh I preferred to hold tamasa including animal fights in the chaugan built by their father There are paintings showing favourite elephants belonging to the Maharajas and some even showing Maharaja Sawai Iswari Singh riding his favourite elephent This proves that somehow the passion of playing chaugan had cooled a bit and the sons of Sawai Jai Singh II showed a preference to other forms of sports and pastimes

Not much change could h ve been expected during the reign of the next ruler Sawai Prithivi Singh, who came to the throne as a young lad of five But apparently the game of chaugan not only regained favour of the man during *his reign* even the ladies started playing the game with renewed interest I have discovered a painting on the walls of the baradari (Northern) of the Zanana kund at Galta, which clearly shows a pair of scantly clad ladies turbaned seated on horse engaged in a melee during a game of chaugan (Fig 24) The players



Fig 24

are still shown using the crooked chaugans as used by the rider in the Zanana mahal of Raja Man Singh I The Bara dari also shows a scene of a royal procession with the inscription clearly indicating that the ruler seated on the elephant is Sawai Prithvi Singh of Jaipur The face also bears a resemblance of the young Maharaja as a youth of 25 years or so There is also a mystery connected with the way in which the *Maharaja met his end According to some sources the Maharaja was a* keen player of chaugan and he loved to practice daily on horse back at the Atish Grounds One day some men of the maji Chadrawatji had him thrown off from his mount so that the way was cleared to put on throne of Jaipur her own son of thirteen Pratap Singh Considering the fact that Sawai Pratap Singh and not Man Singh the son of the deceased Maharaja born of the Kishangarh Princess. became the next ruler We are forced to accept this source Some say that the boy

Man Singh was a posthumous one and so he was superssded by Sawai Pratap Singh Be it as it may the fact remains that chaugan as a favourite game of the people of this region had once again made a place for itself under the sun

Sawai Pratap Singh was a great patron of all forms of sports and pastime During his times the game of chaugan was keenly played This is proved by more historical sources than one There is a painting in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum of Sawai Pratap Singh s period painted in the Jaipur style by one of the fifty of the Surat Khana, which shows Radha and Krishna playing chaugan on horse near the banks of a river It is easy to pass this of as a mythological fantacy of female involvement It is thus possible that the man and their women played at chaugan separately or even together There are some paintings in private house in the walled city of Jaipur and outside in its environs that show men and their women at chaugan The death of Sawai Jagat Singh was the beginning of a reign full of intrigues fowl play murders and treaty with outsiders and their subsquent interference Sports and pastimes therefore became unimportant and so naturally the patronage dwindled

However with the advent of the British and the establi hment of the Jaipur Political Agency the game of chaugan was once again gained popularity This time in its modified form as modern polo using the mellet T stick larger fields more organised formal play Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II used the old chaugan for his games but during the time of his successor Sawai Madho Singh II due to the interests shown by Col Swinton S Jacob a new modern polo field was laid out in front of Jacab s house There are several paintings and photographs of this later half of the last century that show the game of polo in pro gress at the old chaugan and the modern polo ground There are also some painted and tinted photographs of this period showing similar scenes

The period of Sawai Man Singh II saw a new life to this mo dern version of an ancient game He was responsible for taking the Jaipur Polo team to the very top of the world rank teams This gave rise to the 'fearsome foursome epihtet given to the Jaipur Polo team of 1933 by the famous British Journal Tetler and this is said to have inspired some Jaipur modern painters to show the fearsome foursome seated on elephent back scaring the British players on horse back, who are shown fleeing away from the advancig elephant The showing of the

players atop elephant with polo sticks in hand, is not a fragement of immagination of some painter As we have seen we have had sculptures and paintings showing ladies playing chaugan from elephants I have recnetly come across a photograph of game in progress in the old chaugan near the City Palace a photograph from an album showing the Maharaja of Jaipur s Birthday week celebrations of the year 1928 A D The picture clearly shows four elephants with their mahawats holding along handled polo sticks engaged in a mid field melee during a game of this 'different form of polo The oil paintings one of which is displayed in the Polo Victory Cinema and another of which is in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum must have been inspired by this event or another similar event after this one

For Further Reading

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Mural Tradition in Shekhawati Facets of Cultural Data

Vijai Shankar Srivastava*

Shekhawati (27° 20 28°34 North lat X 74°41 76°6′East long) founded in the middle of 15 cent A D by Rao Shekha a scion of the Kachhawaha Rajput house of Amber (Jaipur) is extremely rich in the tradition of art and culture Located in the semi arid zone in north western Rajasthan it was the cradle of early man during the Stone age, followed by the emergence of Copper Age Cultures as revealed from the archaeological diggings made at **Ganeshwar** (*teh* Neem ka Thana *dist* Sikar) The exavations at **Jodhpura Sunari** (*dist* Jhunjhunu) and **Jodhpura Pragpura** located in nearby Toravati region have yielded material remains of the proto historic period in the form of evidence of **Ochre Coloured Pottery** and **Painted Grey Ware** cultures In the medi aeval times the great **Pratihars Chauhans Kayamkhanis** and **Shekha wats** had to contribute their own mite in the formulation of the person ality that is Shekhawati The cultural relics and the monuments which were once the theatre of history bespeak of the rich heritage enshrined in the region Their documentation and detailed study is still a desideratum Equally rich is the tradition of mural paintings in Shekhawati[1]

Rajasthan has a great legacy in the realm of pictorial art beginning to hoary past The discovery of painted rock shelters in Kota Jhalawar Sawai Madhopur Bharatpur and elsewhere in Rajasthan during the last few decades coupled with the rich variety of painted potsherds of the proto historic and historic periods unearthed from the excavated sites explicitly show the great tradition After a big gap the tradition finds its flowering in the form of **Illustrated Manuscripts, Miniatures Vijyapti Patras** विज्ञप्ति पत्र **or Illustrated Letters** of Invitation to Jain **Acharyas** etc)and finally in the wall paintings Painted architecture

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*Deputy Director Deptt.of Archaeology and Museums Rajasthan Jaipur

was the symbol of status and prosperity Ancient works composed in Rajasthan viz **Nisithachurni** written at Bhinamal (7cent A D), **Kuvalayamala Katha** of Udyotana Suri written at Javalipur i e Jalor (V S 835/A D 778 **Prithviraj Mahakavya** (12cent A D)speak in eloquent terms about the wall paintings Sultan Jalaluddin Khilzi during his conquests *(A D 1290 96) of the fort of* **Jhain** near Ranthambhor (Sawai Madhopur) noticed exquisite paintings on the walls of the palace and also smooth glassy plaster on the walls refracting the image of the person beholding it Karl Khandalavala infers it to indicate that the art of preparing a glassy plaster base for murals and also as a decorative treatment of the walls themselves so common in later day Rajput palaces and **havelis** was known and practised in Rajasthan even in the 13 cent A.D [3] **Maharana** Kumbha s (1433 68 A D) palaces at Chittorgarh are also said to contain mural paintings Curiously, the earliest evidence of mural paintings as they are preserved in the from of an integral part of the historical buildings are preserved in Kachhawaha kingdom of Amber The paintings in the Mughal Gateway at Bairat the painted cenotaph of **Maharaja** Man Singh and his palaces at Amber the painted **maqbara** of Maqdoom Shah at Amber and the painted cenotaph of possibly **Maharaja** Bhao Singh at Bhaupura (Jaipur) are good examples[4] and show Mughal impact though the themes are indigenous

The wave of the tradition of murals seems to have reached in the Shekhawati region from the Kachhawaha principality Though in view of time and chronology, the murals in Shekhawati are comparatively late but the painted architecture reached its climax *there* *The* decorated wall became the symptom of the architecture and it became the general belief that the decorations on the walls foster *prosperity* (भींतो माइया मोंहणा) As the bastions adorn the strongholds and citadels, so also the paintings adorn the walls (कोटे सोहै कांगरा, भीते सोहै चीत)-says the poet Meha (16 cent A D) of Churu region Another poet Bhikhajana (V S 1685/A D 1628) hailing from Fatehpur *(Shekhawati)* speaks in his poetic language how the artists are proficient in making forms and creating varied themes [5]

The entire region of Shekhawati along with the contiguous areas like Toravati and Churu are also exceedingly rich in murals, though not very old and formed an unseparable and integral part of the architecture *Sacred as well as secular buildings were* decorated and embellished with paintings both at the exterior and in the interior The Shodhak

temples cenoatphs (छत्री), havelies step wells (बावड़ी) all preserve a rich harvest of mural paintings on varied subjects Many splendoured kaleidoscope of the life of the people and their religious beliefs and customs song and dance, festivals and frolics aspirations and attain ments etc are unleashed through these paintings It is a whole world of rich and robust iridescence This rich repertoire of source material for the study of social and cultural history needs immediate attention and analysis

The entire area of Shekhawati had glorious tradition of paint ings on walls beginning from the close of 17 cent A D to modern times It reached to its climax in the 19 cent and still is a living tradition The introduction and arrival of Railway Train Motor Car Ship Victorian cart Gramaphone etc was a great attraction to the artist and these themes were extensively used while painting the walls of the buildings in Shekhawati As these were introduced in India in mid 19 cent A D and late it helps in dating of these mural paintings[6] In some of the havelies there is also the depiction of the portraits of Queen Victoria George V Edward VIII Maharaja Ram Singh (Jaipur) Maharaja Ganga Singh (Bikaner) and the local rulers etc which also provide additional support to the date of their constructions Some of the inscribed cenotaphs of the local rulers having fine mural paintings are important for the study of the gradual development of the traditions of these murals in Shekhawati region As these cenotaphas are some times dated and memorial tablets installed therein the dating of these murals are on more sure footing One of the earliest painted cenota phs datable to the close of 17 or early 18 cent A D is discovered in Udaipurvati It also contains inscriptions in colour both in Persian language and script which is dated in Hizri era 1114 (1701 A D) and the Hindi inscriptions in Devanagari script are dated in V S 1761 and 1791 (1704 and 1734 A D) This important edifice was built in memory of Shah Jogidas by his two brothers named Bijairam and Deva (Devidas) sons of Bhagwandas Jogidas was the grandson of Mohan Sah the cashier and minister of Todarmal (1640-58 A D) the local ruler of Udaipurvati Some of the other notable painted cenotaphs liks the cenotaph of Rao Sardulsingh (V S 1807/A D 1750) at Parshurampura (Jhunjhunu) cenotaph of Rao Chandasingh (V S 1843/A D 1786) at Ganeri (Sikar) the cenotaph of Takneta(V S 1833/A D 1776) at Churu the cenotaph of Bakshiram Khandelwal Mahajan (V S 1840/A D 1783) at Reengus (Sikar) the undated cenotaph at Kasali (Sikar) the ceno taphs of Doongji Jawarji at patoda (Sikar) etc are landmark in realm of mural paintings in Shekhawati region

These paintings provide detailed glimpse of the social and cultural life of the people No aspect of *life is excluded in them* *Pauranic themes* both Vaishnava and Shaiva *dominate As major bulk* of the mercantile populace in this region belong to Maheshwari class, who are Vaishnava by faith, the *popularity of the scenes from* the life *of Rama and Krishna* seems *natural* Interestingly the havelies of the Jaina Seths also are decorated with Hindu themes-both Rama and Krishna. Sometimes these depictions are *interesting from iconographic* view point At Sardarshahar the fight of Surya and Rahu a theme unknown in the sculptural art finds delineated Love lores and folk themes were other *attraction* of the artists *Dhola Maru was the most* popular theme and there is hardly a building with painting in the region which does not contain scenes from this popular folk lore Usually Dhola and Maru are shown on the camel *which is chased by Umara* Sumara on the horse s back In the Thakurji temple at Bhāleri (Sardar shahar) Maru has been painted as a newly wedded bride with veil The other love lores which find popularity in the murals are *Binjha Sorath*, Sadaya Vatsalinga as well as Laila Majnu, Heer Ranjha Raja Risalu, Jalal Boobana, Guleha fam Begum etc Some of the most famous saints/heroes and their deeds also formed the subject matter of these paintings. To quote a few examples Guru Nanak (Churu 19 cent A D) Pabuji staking his life while protecting cows (Sardarshahar later half of 19 cent A D) portrait of *Doongji Jawarji* (Nawalagarh V S 1957/A D 1900 and Ramgarh) In the cenotaph of Rāo Chāndasingh at Ganeri, Hadi Rani with her severed head kept in a big salver is *shown which happens to be* one of the most pathetic themes from Rajput history Classicial subjects like Raga Ragini and Barahmasa are also depicted in these murals and the cenotaphs of Poddar Seths at Ramgarh *are interesting from this view point* Here the musical melodies are labelled and inscribed

These paintings are the store house of the social and cultural life of the people Day to day life of the commoner and his costoms and beliefs *are vividly portrayed here* The artists took keen interest in depicting various facts of life which was full of vigour and enthusiasm Various customs forming part of the marriage ceremony are delineated in details. *Panaghat* and *Paniharin* was another theme which attracted the painter wherein colourful scenes of ladies on the *village well/stepwell* are *portrayed* Interestingly some themes from

the common life as they find depiction in the murals from Shekhawati are lively and inspiring Suffice it to quote a few examples such as the Raika (राइका) milking the she camel the oxen fetching water from the village well the peasant engaged in ploughing the field the lady at work on the *Charkha* the juggler (मदारी) showing the feats of a monkey to the village folk and the like

As these murals are the creations of the British period glimpses of the European life are also met with Besides the portrait of personages like Queen Victoria George V, Edward VII etc the figures of Edwardian lady with big hat in various postures are also commonly depicted In this context the *havelies* at Sardarshahar are worth mentioning In the bows of one steamship an Englishman of massive proportions is shown here in one of the *havelies* seated on a dias surveying the sea ahead with a large telescope In another painting at the same place is depicted an arctic expedition with thickly clad explorers beside an ice bound ship fighting desperately with a polar bear At the exterior of the *havil es* of Baradia Seths at Sardarshahar the artist has delineated a big ship having inscription Made In Germany but curiously the letters are upside down showing the ignorance of the painter about English alphabets

Folk element is evident in the Shekhawati murals Some of the facinating folk motifs are also painted Curious mythical beasts besides animals (like horse camel elephant) formed with the combina tion of lady figures (नौनारी अश्व नौनारी उष्ट्र नौनारी कुन्जर नौ नारी etc) are very popular subjects The drawings of curious beasts like the one having the face of an animal (fowl?) and the body of the fish a colossal bird (like falcon?) having a group of elephants on the various part of its body are very popular At Ganeshwar the latter has even been labelled as उदण पख (dated V S 1959/A D 1902)

Some of these painted *havelies* and cenotaphs also contain symbolic drawings and graphs (यन्त्र्स नक्शs and तावाज etc) besides inscriptions in red or black colours which are quite interesting As these are incised by the merchant class these inscriptions record the local rates of various commodities on a particular day Such inscriptions are noticed in the cenotaph of the Poddars (V S 1919/A D 1861) at Ram garh and havelies (V S 1982/A D 1925) of Vijaivargiya at Ganeshwar both in district Sikar

As regards the technique of these murals they seem to be painted directly on the dry plaster The straight forward application

of paint on the walls has proved detrimental The utter neglect of these monuments whose owners are living outside in the metropolitan towns as well as the effects of sun rain dust-storm etc have put these edifices in a sad state of preservation Colours of these murals have faded considerably and at places the painted plaster has either cracked or actually been pushed off Paintings are also found on the wooden beams, doors and windows etc The houses also use intricate mirror work in the various apartments chiefly in the ceiling floor niches etc The village-well in Shekawati with four elegant pillars (मरवा) surmounted with dome is also usually decorated and painted In some of the *havelies* and cenotaphs the name of the artists are also met with who are technically known as Chejara (चेजारा) and mostly belonged to the potter s class

Notes

1 The Survey of Antiquities and Art Traditions in Shekhawati region was conducted by the author during August 1978 to April 1983 Though the present (contd) districts of Sikar and Jhunjhunu which originally form part of Shekhawati were honey combed but the contiguous areas of Churu (Bikaner State) and Toravati were also covered partially so as to have an assessment of the trends and traits in the realm of art and culture A number of mounds and sites were dotted historical monuments like artistic temples strong holds step wells havelies were noticed scattered sculptural relics and inscribed memorial tablets were discovered A special attention was paid to the study of art traditions with reference to painted architecture in which the region is surprisingly rich The article is based primarily on the findings and on the spot observations in the context of Mural Traditions of Shekhawati

2 Giriraj Kumar, Painted Rock Shelters from Rajasthan, **Cultural Contours of India** (Dr Satya Prakash Felicitation Volume) ed Vijai Shankar Srivastava, II part Delhi 1981 pp 277 285

3 Career of Jalaluddin Khilzi **Indian Antiquary,** Vol II, No 8 November 1939 and also Karl Khandalavala **Wall Paintings from Amber** Portfolio Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi 1974 p 1

4 Dr Herman Goetz Bairat Murals **Arts Orientalis** *Washington* Vol I No I and Dr Satya Prakash **Uttar Bharti** Agra University, Agra

Karl Khandalavala Wall Paintings from Amber Portfolio Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi 1974

Near the cenotaph at Bhaupura (near Renwal in Jaipur) exists a colossal step well (Baori) which contains an inscription dated V S 1694/A D 1637 written both in Persian and Devanagri scripts It records the construction of the step well by the male nurse (धाऊ) Chatra and (his wife ?) the female nurse (धाई) **Lakshmi** of Maharaja Jai Singh evidently **Mirza Raja** Jai Singh I (A D 1621 166) of Amber for the comfort of god s creatures and donors dedicated it to **Sriji** i e God Vishnu of whom the donors were the devotees For details refer **Dr Satya Prakash** Epigraphia Indica (Arabic and Persian Supplement) 1968 (8) pp 67 68

5 चित्रकार चित्रित शक्ल की हैं विविध चरित्र ।
चित्र चितरा भीखजन, रहा अपन वे चित्र ॥

6 The first railway train in India started in the year 1853 between Bombay and Thana In Rajasthan railway was introduced on 11 August 1873 when Bharatpur was connected with Agra followed by Bandikui Dausa and Bandikui Bharatpur by which were formally opened for public on 20 April 1874

In Shekhawati and contiguous areas railways came in existence in the opening decades of the present century Some important tracks with their date of opening being—

From To	Date of Opening	Miles
Sanganer Niwai	16 11 1905	32 15
Niwai Sawai Madhopur	17 10 1907	41 19
Marwar Frontier Sujangarh	16 9 1909	1 42
Sujangarh Ratangarh	2 2 1910	28 56
Ratangarh Churu	22 5 1910	26 61
Churu Hissar	8 7 1911	79 36
Bikaner Ratangarh	24 11 1912	84 97
Jaipur Reengus	19 12 1916	35 50
Reengus-Palsana	6 4 1918	14 14
Palsana Sikar	1 12 1922	17 02
Sikar Nawalgarh	18 9 1923	16 95
Nawalgarh Jhunjhunu	1 8 1924	22 85
Sikar Fatehpur Sethan	1 8 1924	30 05

For further details refer Ram Pande, **Railways in Rajputana** 1982 Jaipur pp 29 30

Historical Personages—
Murals of South East Rajasthan

B M S Parmar*

Like religious themes Raga raginis Nayikabheda Festivals Baramasa theme portraits of rulers of Kota Bundi Jhalawar and some other neighbouring chiefships were also painted over the walls of the palaces havelis and temples of Kota Bundi Jhalawar Indergarh Uniara and Nagar Some of them are of course contemporary and interesting from the point of view of attempting history by the medium of paintings The place wise study of the theme of this paper follows —

Chitrashala Or Ranvilas Bundi —It is a part of Bundi Palace Complex and consists of inner rooms and verandas The doors of these rooms had ivory inlay work over them The ceilings and the walls have paintings said to be done in the period of Rao Ummed Singh (1749 73) who regained his patriarchal throne from the usurper There is no doubt that the chitrashala paintings were originally executed during his times And probably also painted in the times of his grandson Bishan Singh (1773 1821 A D) and retouched in the times of Ram Singh (1881 89 A D)

The former state of Bundi bordered by Tonk and Jaipur on the north on the west by Mewar to the south by Mewar and Malwa and to the south east by Chambal river which forms natural boundary between Bundi and sister state of Kota The earliest Bundi painting of our interest from historical point of view is datable to the times of Rao Surjan (1554 1585) contemporary of Mughal Emperor Akbar The painting is of Bhalerao and Anipa two named elephants of Rao Surjan

* Registering officer Kota

An inscription on the top left corner states हाथी राव सुरजन का भालेराव अनिपा कु जराई The most powerful ruler of Bundi was Satrusal (1631 1658) who greatly favoured by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan had painters in his employ He took part in the Deccan campaigns and his brother Madho Singh was given the Jagir of Kota in 1632 His son Bhao Singh (1658 1681) and grand son Aniruddha Singh (1681 1695) also participated in Deccan campaigns During Bhao Singh s period Bundi painting made rapid progress but influence of Deccan style is there Under Aniruddha Singh the Bundi style acquired a lyrical quality It was however during the reign of Ummed Singh (1749 73) that the Bundi painting entered in its most glorious phase The study of the mural of our theme begins with it

After the death of Budh Singh his son Ummed Singh was in trouble because of Jai Singh of Jaipur who dethroned him and put his own protege Dalelsingh of Karwar Ummed Singh put his family under the guardianship of Rao Durjansal of Kota Both the princes met and chalked out the scheme to regain the throne with the help of Mewar and Shahpura rulers This meeting between Ummedsingh and Durjansal has been painted by Bundi artist size 2 42×84 cm at Chitrasala Palace Bundi Its date of composition cannot be earlier than 1750 A D because Ummed Singh was able to sadle himself only after regaining Bundi in 1748 A D with the help of Mewar and Kota princes Probably to commomorate the gratitude towards Durjansal of Kota Ummed Singh got painted his meeting with him on wall

Ummed Singh was wise brave and faultless personality but god feering In one of the paintings he is shown worshiping Shrinathji His grandson Bishan Singh has also been shown in the painting with folded hands

Meeting of Ummed Singh and Rao Bishan Singh 1 05×95 Cms is also recorded in these murals In 1771 A D Rao Ummed Singh abdicated the throne of Bundi to pass the rest of his life as royal ascetic He installed his son Ajit Singh in his place But Ajit Singh was not destined to rule for long and breathed last due to a chronic disease Although Ummed Singh had renounced the sceptre, but was compelled to guide his grandson in managing the affairs of the state This painting is the reminiscent of one such meeting in which the two are shown seated over patterned cushion with the

masnad to their back Bishan Singh is wearing turban and smoking hukka, while emaciated Ummed Singh is shown bare headed and his hair have grown grey

Bishan Singh in a garden is one of the finest pieces of murals although more interested in hunting Bishan Singh patronised paintings also In his times Chitrashala was embellished with certain good quality murals among such their is one panel in which Rao Bishan Singh has been painted watching dance performance in the palace garden in the centre of which there is a fountain with lotus and ducks the plantain palm and mango trees are blossomed peacocks are pershed over Besides dancers and singers whole party consists of zanana It is a fine composition and a good specimen of Bundi art of late 18th century Similarly there are some other murals in this Chitra shala showing Bishan Singh on horseback and hunting wild animals

Indergarh Estate of Indergarh was carved out by Indrasal an younger brother of Rao Satrusal of Bundi and in latter Mughal period was amongst the Kothris which used to pay tribute of Rs 17506/- to Kota Durbar of which Rs 6969/ were paid by the latter to Jaipur Indergarh now forms part of Distt Bundi and is situated at the distance of 72 Kms north of Kota on Delhi Bombay Broadguage Railway line Its fort is situated over an hillock Palaces portions known as Zanana Mahal Supari Mahal and Hawa Mahal have wall paintings In the Zanana Mahal there are number of Raga Raginis in mature Bundi style Besides these there is a panel measuring about 3×1 metre inside the arch over the southern gate of the Zanana palace in which a noble probably Indrasal on horse back been painted hunting ducks with the help of falcon and in another he is shown inspecting horses brought from Arab and Turkey

Kota The former state of Kota as we have already said was an offshoot of Bundi Kota is known for its dense forest wealth which is even now the haunts of tigers The rulers constructed hunting lodges near lakes in forest In a painting from Kota a prince and his ladies are depicted sitting in a hunting lodge watching a herd of dear quenching their thrist On the opposite side is a pair of lions The painting is datable to mid *eighteenth* century The murals of our surveyed places mostly reveal the hunting scenes as evident in the following description.

Devta Shridhr ki Haveli Devta Shridharji s ancestors have been priests and advisers to the rulers of Kota This Haveli is multistoried structure overlooking Chambal Its first and second floor rooms have murals covering different traditional themes and some of them have historical personages like Maharao Ummed Singh Kishore Singh and his younger brother Prithivi Singh In another scene Kishore Singh and Prithvi Singh the two sons of Ummed Singh (1770 1819 AD) are depicted while hunting lion

Jhala ki Haveli During late 18th and early 19th century a very renowned person named Jhala Zalim Singh arose to political significance in the state of Kota after the winning of the battle of Bhatwara (1761 AD) which was fought between the forces of Kota and Jaipur In subsequent days he became Dewan of the State and weilded actual power He was great patron of art and literature A Haveli (Kahla Kothi) inside Kota fort is named after him possesses beautiful murals representing mature Kota Style Here in some paintings he has been depicted in the company of a lady, at worship and in prime of his youth But worth mentioning is one panel measuring 6 65×65 Cms wherein Zalim Singh and Maharao Ummed Singh (17 0-1819) are painted hunting Rhiro boar lion wild buffalo and deer in a dense forest The treatment of wild beasts and the landscape proves the skill of Kota artist

In other palaces the rulers of Kota have been painted while playing Holi participating in the festivals of Dashera Gangaur and in hunting expeditions Rao Ummed Singh and Ram Singh II (1827 65 AD) have prominently depicted in these Murals

Uniara & Nagar Fief of Uniara enjoyed quasi independant status during 18 19th centuries and comparised the parganas of Uniara Nagar Kakor and Banetha said to be granted to Chanderbhan by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan It is also to be added here that Uniara Chiefs always remained politically alligned to the house of Jaipur accepting the suzerainty Rao Raja Sardar Singh was the contemporary of Sawai Jai Singh and connived with him to dethron Budh Singh of Bundi he built palaces at Nagar and Uniara which have mural paintings

Nagar is situated 35 Kms south of Tonk Previously it formed part of Uniara Thikana There is Palace inside the fort Much before Narukas Nagar was a great cultural centre It remained the capital (Karkot

Nagar) of the Malawa tribe from 2nd century B C to 4th century A D Archaeological excavations of its ancient site have revealed a good number of copper coins bearing legend Jaya Malavanam in Brahmi characters besides terracottas Raja Sardar Singh I built a palace here and got its walls painted The themes here also are traditional and some of them are related with contemporary princes details of them are being given in the paintings like —

Rao Raja Sardar Singh I, It is an half profile portray (66×66 Cms) inside a nicke done over the araish most probably by Mir Bagas an artist of Bundi Style This Nagar portrait of Sardar Singh is quite similar to that of Umara palace and differ a little in delination of moustaches from his another portrait of **Bhagvata Puran** (1759 A D) painted by Mir Bagas This **Bhagvata Puran** manuscript is in the private collection of Rajendra Singh of Umara a descendant of Rao Raja Sardar Singh I

Budha Singh and his courtiers -(43×38 Cms) is another mural Budh Singh (1702 29 A D) was the brother in law of Jai Singh But after he death of Aurangzeb later s ambitions arose so high that Budh Singh was evicted from Bundi throne and Sardar Singh of Umara connived with Amber ruler in this political game Here in this mural Budh Singh has been shown while seated over a cushioned seat smoking hukka His face is whispered and quite akin to that of Bundi Chitrashala and National Musuem Ragmala miniatures of his period Deva Singh Dalel Singh and Salim Singh are the courtiers seated infront of him and in the left

Meeting of the Princes (43×41) is a mural depicting Ummed Singh (1729 69 AD) of Shahapura (Mewar) Gopal Singh II (1724 57) of Karauli Surajmal (1756 63) of Bharatpur and the Maratha general Malhar Rao Holkar It is believed that such meeting took place

Besides there are two more paintings depicting an youthful Zalim Singh Zhala seated with folded hands infront of Maharao Satrusal (Fig 25) and in like manner prince Ummed Singh seated infront of his father Budha Singh

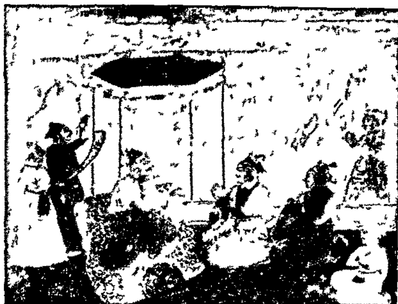


Fig 25

Interestingly in another panel according to inscription Emperors Shahjahan and Aurangzeb are shown with Jai Singh of Amber (Fig 26) All these Murals are of Bundi style datable to late 18th century



Fig 26

Uniara Palace Uniara palace was also built by Rao Raja Sardar Singh I under his patronage an artist named Mir Bagas painted the portraits of Maharaja Naru and from Chandra Bhan to Sardar

Singh But the protraits of Sirdar Singh and his grand father Sangram Singh s (1690 1715 AD) faces resemble with each other In one of the wall paintings Thakur Fateh Singh, Sangram Singh and Rao Ajit Singh are depicted (Fig 27)



Fig 27

Jaswant Singh Vishnu or Bishan Singh and Bhim Singh respectively were his successors portraits of them have also been painted over the walls But the courtscene and portraits of them are done by the artists trained in Jaipur style Their quality of colouring drawing and composition is poor Due to the ravages of time inadequate maintenance and their exposure to the nestling of birds the colours of these murals have faded and araisha plaster has withered away at places

Jhalawar s garh palaces have also murals of 19th and 20th centuries These palaces now are the head quarters of District offices The theme is traditional Rag raginies Ramayan Mahabharat but some portraits of historical personages are also depicted

Vaishnavism as the Source of Pictorial Tradition in Rajasthan

Ram Pande* and Jagatnarain**

The eleventh century had witnessed great popularity of the vaishnavacult of Bhakti Movement Alberuni who visited India in the wake of invasion of Mehmood of Ghazani in 1017 found the religion of the people vaishnava was also fascinated by the noble idea of **Bhagvat Gita**

This popularity was largely due to the work of south Indian saint Ramanuja (1017 1137) who was long lived A contemporary of Ramanuja was Nimbarka (died) 1162) He was born at Nimba in the Bellary District of Karnataka According to Nimbarka the way to peace and happiness is bhakti for the lotus like feet of Krishna and that bhakti is only to be obtained through grace

At the close of the twelfth century Jayadeva the Bengali poet wrote the **Gita Govinda** on the love of Radha and Krishan Radha is the invention of this poet Henceforth in eastern India the province of Bihar and Bengal became the centre of Radha Krishna Cult Vidyapati (fl 1400 1470) a Bihari wrote poetry of great sensous charm on the love of Radha and Krishna His contemporary was the Bengali poet Chandi Das (fl 1429) who lived at Nannura in the Birbhum District of West Bengal He had fallen in love with a washerwoman Rami who in fact was his Radha He was boycotted by his Brahmin kinsmen for what they regarded as a social crime a high caste Brahimin falling in love with a low-caste woman When in distress he prayed to his family goddess Basuli the goddess appeared to him in dream and said, love

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* Shodhak Jaipur

** Govt P G College Kota

this woman my son it is your fate that you should do so nay, this love will sanctify you neither I nor hundreds of gods and goddesses like me will be able to give you a glimpse of that higher life which this woman s love will teach you '

By the middle of the thirteenth century Islam was firmly established in India and made an impact on the religion of the Hindus Islam declared that there was one great God, who was supporter of the virtuous and the sustainer of the world There was growing disenchant ment among the Hindus with speculative and philosophical theories on religion which were current and which could no longer satisfy their spiritual needs This promoted the faith in Krishna as the personal God who loved mankind Another contribution which Islam made to the Hindu religious thought was through Sufism

The Sufi techniques of inducing mystic ecstasy such as dancing music repetition of the name of God and the recital of love poems were adopted by Chaitanya (1486 1533) the prophet of Vaishnavism in Bengal According to Chaitanya God or Krishna is the lover and the soul of man is his bride represented by Radha For describing the stages of Radha s love for Krishna the analogy of human love as adopted The first is the awakening of love The next is the meeting of lovers followed by sambhoga or union Then comes grief on separation symbolized by the anguish suffered by the gopis of Vriandavana when Krishna goes to Mathura Finally comes bhansmmilana or the spiritual marriage The system of Chaitnya aimed at the culture of emotion and thus arose a subtle classifaction of love which could be cultivated in many ways He came to the realization that love is the supreme regulat ing principle of the universe The universe is a poem and the spiritual soul alone is privileged to read its deep poetry

The rise of Vishnavism as a faith of the Hindus had *special* significance for Rajasthan In the fifteenth century Braja the country around Mathura became the centre of Krishna worship Vallabhacha rya (born 1478) and his son Vithalnatha were the founders of the new creed They were followed by the blind poet Sur Das (1479 1584) whose poem on the emploits of Krishna compiled in the **Premsagar** a poetical version of the **Bhagavata Purana** provided themes for paintings to the artists not only of Mewar but whole of Rajputana Mira Bai (1504-

1550) the princess of Mewar s devotional poems in praise of Krishna which are still sung in India She was followed by Bihari Lal (1595 1613) the author of the Sat Sai and Sawant Singh Raja of Kishangarh in the middle of eighteenth century The romantic mystical poetry of these poets inspired the paintings of Rajasthan The deity of Shrinathji towards the last quarter of 17th century was brought to Nathdwara where a separate school of painting started with Vaishnavism theme

Sawant Singh was follower of the Vallabhacharya Cult pushti Marg the Path o Pleasure According to this cult God is to be sought in the enjoyment of life rather than in asceticism The Brahman priests of Pushthi Marg who presided over the ritual of Krishna worship evolved a beautiful ceremony with plentiful use of incense and flowers They and their followers dressed in silk and anointed themselves with perfumed oil Their followers were the Rajas the airstocracy and the wealthy merchants

The drama of the mystic love of Radha and Krishna was not peculiar to Kishangarh In fact it was enacted in palaces and mansions of aristocracy and merchants all over Rajasthan in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Partap Singh (1779 1803) the epicurean ruler of Jaipur used to dress as Krishna while his concubines played the role of gopis in **rasa dance** in some of the paintings from Jaipur he is dressed as Krishna playing the flute while a favourite concubine representing Radha stands by him gazing lovingly into his eyes In fact the new cult provided a pretext to the princes and noble for erotic experiences with their concubines and courtesans under the guise of religion It is this refined eroticism which we find reflected in the paintings of this period which lends them great charm

In 1757 Sawant Singh abdicated the throne and accompained by his faithful Bani Thani proceeded to Virndavana There he spent the remaining years of his life and died in 1764 A year later Bani Thani too followed him

A characteristic of the Kishangarh painting is that a number of them which deal with the Krishna theme do not follow the familiar anecdotes mentioned in the **Bhagvata Purana** These are the paintings which are based on the verses of Sawant Singh They indicate a close personal relationship between the poet and the patron on one side and the artist on the other Besides the Krishna of these paintings is not the pastoral god of Gokula and Virndavanana but an aristocrat slim and

tall he is Rajput prince, dignified and arrogant Radha is not a simple village girl but courtesan who is conscious of her beauty and knows the art of seduction

The vallabha cult has influenced paintings very much The religious works like Bhagvats were painted The erotic works like Jaideo s Gita Govinda and Vidyapati were also paintad besides the walls This has revolutionalised in the field of temple architecture also by giving a concept of Pichhwai

Vallabha infulance is quite obvious in the murals and miniatu res of the Marwar because of Jsawant Singh s association with Shrinathji During his time Chopasani became the centre of Vallabha art According to the statement of Lama Tara Nath and painting in Jains temple the tradition of miniatures and murals is very old Nagor painting of Shantinath Temple is dated 1605 AD Pali is nearby town of Jodhpur was a prolifice Tikhana of the painting work during the time of Raja Gaj Singh (1610-1630) Bhakat Singh (1724 49) was ruler of Nagor He executed some wall paintings in the buildings like Hawa Mahal Badal Mahal Shish Mahal at the Nagor Fort Both in quality and quantity in atelier of the Maharaja soon a sub school of Marwar mural sprang up These paintings reveal that the Maharaja got them painted under the infulance of Vaishnava Cult By painting Shri Krishna and Radha the Maharaja actually took immence delight in seeing women in the different poses and theme of so called Vaishnava cult

Maharaja Man Singh due to his unconscious faith in the Nath cult accorded to the Kanpatha Yogies a partial treatment later it became a panth painting of Jhalandar Nath is clear proof of it.

Sirohi wall paintings may be regarded as unique in this direc tion as the theme of these is the life of Ram and Sita in place of Krisha and Radha

For Further Study

1 Karl Khandalavala and Eric Dickinson Kishangarh Paintings
2 M S Randhawa and D S Randhwa Kishangarh Painting
3 Dinesh Chandra Sen Chaitanya and His Age
4 Thomes Arnold and Alfred Gullauave The Legacy of Islam
5 R A Agarwal Marwar Murals

Tribal Wall Paintings in the Perimeter of History and Culture

Veerbala Bharsar*

Rajasthan is famous for its colourful tradition of miniature paintings from early historic to modern times 'Vagad area whose main districts are Banswara and Dungarpur in South west of Rajasthan has also a colourful living tradition of art Banswara Dungarpur Pratapgarh and neighbouring villages belong to M P and Gujarat States has a vast population of Bhil tribe Bhils are considered as aboriginal inhabitants of this place and the minas are also very important aboriginal tribe of this area They have their own culture and traditions Though they are Non Aryans but now mingled with Hindu culture

In the interior villages and remote areas they are still living with their primitive culture We can meet the Shamans (Bhopas) who guide their life and cure the disease We can see Menhir (Seera cheera in their own Language) as the monumental slabs or tablet of their deceased ancestors which are carved in stone This is the oldest culture of the primitive people not only of these tribes but of all the primitive tribes in world [1]

We can see the paintings on wall in each and almost every occasions On the most important occasion of marriage they paint with termeric and rice powder on the mud wall The names of these paintings are Deradi Bharadi or 'Maret or Gotrej (area wise difference) This is a pentagon *form of the composition in which they* paint a couple of figure (bride and bridegroom) and some times god goddess depicting a peacock on the top of the fifth corner [2] In other empty places they put a form of sun moon and stars out side of the

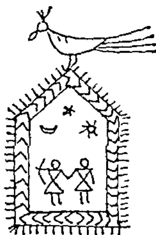


Fig 28

Dept of Drawing and Paintings Univ of Rajasthan Jaipur

pentagon sometimes they paint a horse rider, in it s most primitive form The motif of this horse (excluding the rider) has a character of the stone age animal paintings of Altamira cave in Spain [3]

They execute a human figure out of two reversed triangles and a round on it to show the face or head and the two straight lines are enough to depict the hands This is also a one of the oldest style of cave paintings in India reported by V S Wakankar from the nearest *places of Vagad in M P as well as from Kota of south east Rajasthan* The Gonds of M P also draw this type of figures on their walls [4]

It is well known that the Vagad is a part of Aharian culture which is the oldest culture of Rajasthan and parallel to that of the Harappan culture of Indus Valley The Vagad is an important place for it s copper industry, which was developed by the inhabitants of this region These people have been forming a culture of thousands years ago which is the pre harappan culture These people of Vaged draw the forms of trident sun and moon on different occasions The form of trident represnts Lord Shiva or Bhairon, which is the favourite god of Bhils The sun and moon probably represent the phenomenon of nature

There are many other paintings of the animals like cow goat bull and even a camel which is not a popular animal of this region [6] Thus we can see the variety of paintings on the mud walls of the tribal people

References

1 ' Bhils erect stone tablets in memory of their male dead (never to deceased women) and as a rule, the figure of the deceased is carved on the stone ' Rajasthan Gazetteer *1879 Vol I P 122*

2 The Pentagon drawinc from Loharia, Thesil Kushalgarh Dist Banswara *(Fig 28 at Page 96)*

3 (a) Drawing from M C Burkitt s ' The Old Stone Age ' 1969- Calcutt P 169 *(Altamira cave Spain) (Fig 29)*

(b) Drawing from Tehsil Ghatol Dist Banswara (Fig 30)



Fig 29



Fig 30

4 (a) Drawing from V S Wakankar s Stone Age Painting 1976-Bombay P 15 (Bhimbetka) (Fig 31)
(b) Drawing from Tehsil Ghatol Dist Banswara (Fig 32)



Fig 31



Fig 32

5 the area of Udaiupr Dungarpur and Banswara Districts had witnessed the growth and development of Ahar culture which florished in the region as an independent entity as early as 2000 B C In that part of Rajasthan also the indigenous people had developed copper industry though we have got earlier remains also at Bigor (Dist Bhilwara) in the form of copper arrow heads etc and datable to 2800 B C on the basis of C 14 analysis much before Pre Harappan culture Shodhak (A journal of Historical Research) 1983 Vol 11 P/A R C Agrawal s Prohistoric Rajasthan—The cradle of copper Age culture Jaipur P 20

6 (a) Drawing from Peepal Khoont Dist Banswara (Camels) (Fig 33)
(b) Same place (a cow) (Fig 34)





Fig 34